DIALOGUE

BETWEEN A

NOBLEMAN AND A FARMER,

UPON THE

Reduction of the National Debt,

And other Affairs of State:

ALSO,

The diſtreſſed condition of the Farmers in Scotland, conſidered; with the probable means of their relief, and their Landlords advantage;—

AND

A more effectual Method than any hitherto, for ſuppreſſing Vice and Immorality, and encouraging of Religion and Virtue.— The whole calculated exceedingly to promote the Proſperity and Grandeur of the Britiſh Nation.

By WILLIAM SUTTOR *a Native of Banff.*

Righteouſneſs exalteth a Nation.

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To the Right Honourable

The Lords and Commons of Great Britain.

Moſt Noble and Illuſtrious Senate,

WERE it poſſible to point out to your Lordſhips any ſociety of perſons in Great Britain, of ſuch conſequence to their Country, as, under due and proper encouragement, could be rendered both able and willing to clear this oppreſſed State of the cumberous load of 280 millions in the ſpace of 35 years; and, not only ſo, but to uphold by penſion a numerous and powerful Army,—an Army not inadequate to the Majeſty of the Britiſh Empire, without the leaſt oppreſſion to themſelves or the people, but rather bearing deliverance from the ſame, without the leaſt infringement of the preſent Revenues or Fortunes of the Nobility, &c. and attended with many other ſalutary effects not here mentioned, what impiety were it once to queſtion, Whether the wiſdom, juſtice, and goodneſs of Parliament, would not take the moſt ſpecial concern, to grant ſuch encouragement as may be needful to carry ſuch meaſures into execution.—Pardon me then, moſt illuſtrious Lords, if warmeſt loyalty to the beſt of Sovereigns,—fervent love to my native Country,—earneſt deſire of her deliverance from oppreſſion,—and even mine own reſcue in the general deliverance, who has long waded in the deeps of adverſity:—If I have implored your Lordſhips notice of this ſyſtem, Whether ſhould the oppreſſed fly but to the powerful protection of that illuſtrious Houſe, whoſe grand origin and deſign is

to

to ſave the people from rapine and oppreſſion within, and from the violence of enemies without.

When I conſider the highly exalted dignity of this great and illuſtrious Houſe, I am confounded and abaſhed to the loweſt poſſible degree, to preſent the thoughts of my nothingneſs and inſignificance; but when I conſider the amazing and infinite advantages that might attend ſome ſuch meaſures, not only to the parties chiefly concerned, but to the whole State at large, I am encouraged to creep forward from my obſcurity, though with a trembling hand, to preſent the rude materials of my indigeſted thoughts, which yet your Lordſhips conſummate and princely wiſdoms may poliſh up and form into a fair and beauteous ſyſtem.

May that God, by whom Kings reign and Princes decree juſtice, bleſs your Lordſhips with many, and happy days,— may His Grace enable your Lordſhips ſo to uſe your great powers on earth, that when death ſhall receive the high commiſſion to ſtrip your princely heads of all their honours here,—may Crowns of Glory await you, that ſhall never fade away.——I have the honour to be,

Moſt illuſtrious Senate,

Your moſt devoted,

And very humble Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

To the Right Honourable

WILLIAM PITT,

First Lord Commissioner of the Treasury.

Most Illustrious Sir,

WE have long beheld with infinite regret, the increasing depopulation of this oppressed Country, while thousands of our fellow subjects and friends, are posting away to foreign lands in quest of that bread which, with far more ease and facility, might be found at home, were it pleasing God to put it into the hearts of the noble Proprietors of the landed interest, to grant such encouragement as might be mutually advantageous on both sides; yet even admitting the same were granted, and every other encouragement that could possibly be devised for the prosperity of the State, yet how vain are the finest drawn schemes of human policy and human wisdom unassisted by divine, as was easy to be read in the late destructive war. What seas of blood, what millions of treasure, what extent of empire, have we not lost? What then? Should we blame our Ministry, and censure Administration? We should not; as we dare say, neither was wanting wisdom in the Cabinet, nor valour in the field, to accomplish the desirable ends. By what means then were we overthrown? Why, the Divine indignation was awakened against us on account of sin. By these alone were our purposes overthrown. The most evident indications of Divine displeasure appeared against us through the whole process of that war. The poorest of us all are guilty as the rich.

But what shall be done then to recover our past losses, and prevent our future ruin? While the

Princes

Princes of Europe are become ſo fluctuating and reſtleſs in the ſcale of Empire, that it threatens lightneſs on our ſide; that while we are endeavouring by treaty to ſecure one, we are likely to loſe two;—therefore, our ſyſtem preſents us with a new Ally, or rather an old one, almoſt forgotten, whom, if we will take into the balance of power, we ſhall be more than match for all our enemies. Britannia will then become the Guardian of Europe,— the Miſtreſs of the Deep,— the terror and delight of ſurrounding nations, and recover more glory than ever ſhe loſt. Though lately viſited with ſword and famine, yet in tender compaſſion God has laid theſe aſide. His chaſtiſing hand is pleaſed to act ſo for the preſent, in hopes that His goodneſs will lead us to repentance.

Thus, Great Sir, this renowned Majeſty courts your alliance. His friendſhip is worthy our higheſt regard; and if our human laws are carried into execution, for the ſuppreſſion of vice and immorality; and for encouraging religion and virtue, as they are for the recovery of private debts, and public taxes, we ſhould ſoon ſee the interpoſing hand of our Divine Ally in all things that could promote our national felicity. When a people's ways pleaſe the Lord, He can make even their enemies to be at peace with them.

Thus, Great Sir, will it be of the higheſt importance to Adminiſtration, and the Britiſh dominions, to honour Almighty God, by promoting the intereſt of his ſpiritual kingdom as you would an earthly one.— It was amongſt the laſt words of your illuſtrious Father in the Britiſh Senate,—Peace with America, and war with all the world. Say then, Great Sir, in alluſion to his words, "Peace with "God, and war with all the world."—I have the honour to be, Moſt illuſtrious Sir,

Your moſt devoted humble Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

DIALOGUE

BETWIXT A

NOBLEMAN AND A FARMER,

UPON THE

NATIONAL DEBT, &c.

Nobleman. WELL, What news to day among the politicians of your quarter?

Farmer. Nothing, my Lord, worth relating.

Nob. Never did any age more abound with politicians; and if their joint ſpeculations could be rendered profitable, never did any age ſtand more in need; yea, there is not a cobler in his ſtall now-a-days, but muſt be nibbling at ſtate affairs.

Farm. Your Lordſhip's concluſion being ſomewhat ironical, and implying, that the common ranks of mankind ought to take no notice of ſtate affairs,—I would, with all due reverence and ſubmiſſion, beg

leave to differ a little from your Lordſhip on theſe heads.

Nob. On what ground?

Farm. On this ground, my Lord. The cobler is a member of the commonwealth as well as my Lord, or his Grace. If his country flouriſhes, he reaps ſome ſmall ſhare of its advantages; if it ſinks into ruin, he is ſure of a large ſhare of its diſadvantages, How then, my Lord, can I condemn the cobler, if, fearful for the overthrow of his native country, and fond of its preſervation, he ſhould draw fancied ſcenes of happineſs for himſelf and his country, and entertain himſelf with his neighbours on theſe heads?

Nob. But you go a great deal further; for I hear you intend a publication, holding forth a vaſt many fine and marvellous things; *namely*, That it is impoſſible for the lower ranks of mankind to be able to ſubſiſt in theſe kingdoms, either in city or country;—in cities and towns they are oppreſſed with the extravagant prices of the neceſſaries of life, decay of trade, *&c.* and, in the country, they are oppreſſed with the exorbitant rents of land, and ſhortneſs of leaſes, that it is no wonder if the people emigrate by hundreds, and by

thouſands

thouſands;—that it is a pity, at the concluſion of a war, to ſee ſo many brave ſailors and ſoldiers, by whoſe valour ſo many glorious victories have been obtained, diſbanded without penſion, and in want of bread; ſome running away to the ſervice of foreign Princes and States; ſome, in the decline of life, conſtrained to beg their bread in the ſtreets of theſe very realms which their valour ſaved from ruin; ſome, obliged to betake themſelves to the highways for robbery; ſo that you can ſcarce go a few miles from your own doors, but you are in danger of being knocked on the head;—that if you had the management of the landed intereſt of Great Britain, you would, by agriculture alone, pay off the laſt ſhilling of the national debt in thirty five years, without the leaſt aſſiſtance from the trading part of the nation; would they only continue to pay the intereſt, that you would point out a way to furniſh Great Britain with two hundred thouſand men for the ſervice of the army and navy without impreſſing one man;—that you would never wiſh to ſee our moſt gracious Sovereign have one man leſs at his readieſt call, even in the moſt profound peace, to keep his reſtleſs enemies in ſome

awe;—that, for this purpoſe, you would point out a way to raiſe One million eight hundred thouſand pounds Sterling to penſion this numerous and puiſſant army, at nine pound Sterling yearly each man;—that no nobleman or gentleman's fortune, or rents, ſhould ſuffer one ſhilling of decreaſe, by any of theſe meaſures;—that the perſons upon whom theſe ſums are levied ſhould feel leſs of their oppreſſions than before the arduous taſk was begun;—that the ſyſtem of meaſures under conſideration, ſhould give ſuch ample encouragement to induſtry as Britain never experienced ſince it was a nation;—that they would effectually prevent all emigrations in future, and prove a moſt ſovereign remedy againſt a ſpirit of rebellion;—that, in reſpect of what it is at preſent, they would make the country beautiful as the garden of Eden;—that whether thoſe meaſures took place or not, ſuch weight of reaſon and argument could be offered in their favours, as all the orators on the adverſe ſide ſhould not be able to overturn;—theſe, and ſuch like aſſertions, ſmell ſo ſtrongly of Romance, that I would be fond to hear their further explanation.

Farm.

Farm. I cannot deny, my Lord, but that I and my neighbours have diverted ourſelves, at hours of leiſure, upon all theſe ſubjects; but a reſolution to publiſh, I could not ſo eaſily find; but as your Lordſhip offers to honour me with your attention, I ſhall endeavour to explain them, ſo far as I can; only, I find myſelf ſomewhat embarraſſed, how to uſe ſuch freedom and plainneſs as the nature of the buſineſs neceſſarily requires; and, therefore, I would, with all due reverence and ſubmiſſion, beg your Lordſhip's approbation of the three following points, as ſo many preliminary articles, without which I dare not preſume to ſpeak.

Nob. What are they?

Farm. Will you be pleaſed, my Lord, not to take offence, at ſuch honeſt plainneſs and freedom of ſpeech as the nature of the buſineſs neceſſarily requires?

Nob. I will not indeed be angry for honeſt and plain dealing.

Farm. Will your Lordſhip be pleaſed then not to oppoſe or condemn ſuch meaſures for payment of the National Debt as ſhall noways leſſen the fortunes or yearly rents of the Nobility and Gentlemen of the nation.

Nob. I could have no reaſon for that.

Farm. I have only one difficulty, my Lord, which, if I could get over, I ſhould eſteem the cauſe half won, which is this, if your Lordſhip, with the other noblemen and gentlemen of the nation, in commiſeration to the diſtreſſed State, would make no alteration or advance in your rents, till the great buſineſs was accompliſhed, or the ſaid thirty-five years were elapſed, as needful to clear the debt, which would ſcarce be ſo tedious, as if the heritors had given the tenants two nineteen years from the preſent date, a thing not altogether uncommon even in theſe days, the weight, my Lord, of Two Hundred and Eighty Millions muſt be felt ſomewhere, your Lordſhip need only feel it in the exerciſe of a little patience, but the tenants muſt ſuffer ſeverely in their patience, perſons, and purſes;—in their patience and perſons, by hard labour and induſtry, and, in their purſes, by a vaſt and almoſt unmeaſurable expence in clearing the foreſaid debt. I will ſuppoſe your Lordſhip's fortune about twenty thouſand pounds yearly rent, if your Lordſhip would agree to the third preliminary article, namely, to ſpare the tenants for the above-mentioned time, I will inſure your

 Lordſhip

Lordſhip of thirty thouſand pounds a year thereafter, *viz.* ten thouſand above the preſent rent, and all other heritors a ſum in proportion to the extent of their fortunes, that is, one third more than they draw at preſent, which I will demonſtrate to your Lordſhip's entire ſatisfaction.

Nob. If your ſyſtem of meaſures ſhall be found productive of ſuch ſalutary effects as they ſeem to hold forth, namely, to free the diſtreſſed ſtate from ſuch an enormous load of debt, to make the whole nation happy in ſo many different reſpects, and, in the concluſion, to make the fortunes of the Nobility and Gentlemen of the nation one third greater than they are at preſent, I think I might juſtly deem myſelf unworthy to poſſeſs a foot of land, if I ſhould refuſe my acquieſcence. But proceed, as ſoon as poſſible, to explain your meaſures.

Farm. I return you thanks, my Lord, for this generous declaration of your Lordſhip's mind, and flatter myſelf, that it may be the firſt dawning of better days awaiting this diſtreſſed country, when thouſands more of your illuſtrious Peers ſhall follow your great example, and ſee

really

ſee public proſperity and private felicity walk hand in hand.

There are yet four different points needful to be mentioned as preparatory to the main buſineſs, either as needful to ſet our after-claims and expectations in a juſt light; or to demonſtrate the juſtice and equity of the ſame; after which I proceed to obey your Lordſhip's commands.

The firſt point concerns the common prices of land.

The ſecond concerns the rents of land.

The third concerns the common time given in farming of lands.

The fourth point concerns the difference between the price of land and the expence needful to improve the ſame, eſpecially ground lying in a natural ſtate.

And, *firſt*, with regard to the price of land. Here I muſt obſerve to your Lordſhip, that I have ſo oft taken notice of the price of land by the acre, the number of acres of each kind, *namely*, infield, outfield, and barren ground, were advertiſed upon an eſtate for ſale, which eſtate when ſold, and the price known, and a diviſion made of the money upon the whole acres, according to their ſeveral qualities, I found the infield gene-

rally

rally L. 6 : 6 : 8 each acre, the outfield L. 3, and the barren ground L. 1 : 6 : 8, which I offer to prove at any time to the entire conviction of all men. But ſome will object, that, thirty or forty years ago, the land was ſold higher than now, and that forty years purchaſe was as common then as twenty-five at preſent. To this I anſwer,—That if the number of years purchaſe were, perhaps, one third more at that time than the preſent, the rents at this time are double to what they were then, which doth more than overbalance the weight of that objection.

The ſecond point concerns the rents of land.

Here, my Lord, I muſt obſerve, that the Britiſh Parliament have wiſely, and in great favour to the borrowing part of the Nation, interfered by law, to modify the intereſt of money, limiting it to five *per cent.* it were greatly to be wiſhed, and with equal juſtice and propriety might be expected, they would alſo interfere in modifying the rents of lands. In the former caſe it prevents the lender from oppreſſing the borrower by an exorbitant intereſt; in this caſe, it would prevent the people from oppreſſing each other, or from being oppreſſed by an exorbitant

orbitant rent. But what rule ſhall be laid down for this? I anſwer, the knowledge of the number of acres of each kind of ground, together with the knowledge of the price of each kind, is a ſure rule whereupon to found an equitable rent.

Nob. But what degree of returns on money laid out upon land might be eſteemed equitable?

Farm. To this I anſwer, Five *per cent.* is eſteemed ſufficient for borrowed money, ſeven and an half for money laid out upon houſe-building, although houſes are known to be a periſhing ſubject; but if heritors would give their tenants ſufficient encouragement with regard to time, I would not offer leſs than ſeven and an half *per cent.*—on this further condition alſo, that they would for ſome time ſuffer the two and an half *per cent.* to be applied to a certain important purpoſe hereafter to be mentioned. The two and an half *per cent.* when added to the five formerly paid, would make the infield acre nine ſhillings and ſixpence, the outfield four ſhillings and ſixpence, and the barren ground acre two ſhillings; but ſuch rents, at an average, upon all theſe ſeveral kinds, no man could continue

to

to pay without a perpetual leaſe of the lands, eſpecially in the interior parts of the country, far from cities and towns, from rich manure, and incapable, through diſtance, of ſupplying the towns with productions of a more lucrative nature than the common productions of country farms.

The third point, my Lord, reſpects the common time given in a leaſe, which is nineteen years. I muſt again obſerve to your Lordſhip, that four pounds Scots each acre upon a country farm may be downright oppreſſion under a leaſe of nineteen years, when ſix pounds Scots may be a deliverance from that oppreſſion under a perpetuity of the lands. The reaſon, my Lord, is evident: One enters upon a farm of your Lordſhip; his predeceſſor, upon that farm, has left it in a ſtate of abſolute ruin, and he is almoſt ruined before he can reſtore it to any tolerable degree of fertility. It is but a few crops he can get of it while in tolerable condition, until the farm, being apparently better, another overbids him, and he muſt leave it; and if he does himſelf juſtice, he muſt leave it as ruinous as he found it, or, if he ſhould continue upon paying the advanced rent which his neighbour offered, perhaps L. 10 Sterling yearly

ly of riſe, having ſunk L. 200 Sterling in bringing it from a ruinous ſtate, What now is the conſequence? Why, a ruined farm and an envious neighbour oblige him to pay intereſt for his own money 19 years more. Again, my Lord, ſo pernicious are ſhort leaſes to all parties concerned, that they ſeem calculated on purpoſe to ruin the maſter, the tenant, and the ſoil,—to diſcourage all induſtry, yea, and to puniſh it,—not only to wink at ſloth, but alſo to reward it; both which points I ſhall prove by the following example: Two neighbours take each of them a farm from a gentleman in the neighbourhood; the farms are of equal extent, equal in condition, equal in rent, and they are equal in circumſtances. The one is a perſon of great induſtry; ſo that, by great diligence, and a vaſt expence, in nine or ten years, his farm is the admiration of the whole country. On the other hand, his neighbour is ſluggiſh, his farm is coveted by none: He makes a ſhift indeed to pay the landlord, and to have a miſerable ſubſiſtence for himſelf; but what now is the conſequence of their conduct ſo different? Why, their time is far advanced; double rent is offered for the one, and

nothing

nothing for the other; ſome hundred pounds are expended by the induſtrious man, the half of which he will never draw in; he cannot afford to continue on the advanced rent, and he ſuffers by his removal. Thus is he puniſhed in proportion to his induſtry, as he muſt remove, whilſt the ſluggard is rewarded with the peaceable poſſeſſion of his farm. Their maſter, meantime, counts upon his advanced rents, frames his living accordingly; but his new tenants have promiſed what ſhall never be paid, and he becomes as unable to hold his fortune as they are to hold their farms.

The fourth and laſt point I ſhall trouble your Lordſhip with is, the difference between the price of land and the expence required to improve it. Your Lordſhip will remember, that I offered to prove, that the general prices of the ſeveral kinds of ground commonly deſcribed in farms are, L. 6 : 6 : 8, each acre, for infield, L. 3 for outfield, and L. 1 : 6 : 8 Sterling for barren ground. I ſhall ſpeak firſt concerning the barren ground, becauſe it is moſt ruinous to the tenants, when taken upon improper terms. Six times its price will ſcarce improve it, which is L. 8 Sterling. I appeal, therefore, to your Lord-

ſhip's judgement, What reaſon, juſtice, or equity is in this, that an heritor ſhould purchaſe barren ground at the above mentioned price, and hold it forever; and the tenant lay out ſix times its price on its improvement, and poſſeſs it but 19 years. My Lord, if ever there was need to apply that Divine Precept of the Lord of Lords to any tranſaction in human affairs, there is need of it here. "All things whatſoever ye would that men ſhould do unto you, do ye even ſo unto them: for this is the Law and the Prophets."

I proceed now, my Lord, as my poor abilities will permit, to explain the beſt ſyſtem of meaſures I can think of, as needful to produce the ſalutary effects before mentioned.

England is deſcribed by ſome to be 300 miles in length, and 300 in breadth, which, multiplying the breadth by the length, contains 90,000 ſquare miles.

Scotland is deſcribed to be 300 miles in length and 150 in breadth, which contains 45,000 ſquare miles.

The whole iſland containing 135000 ſquare miles. From which 10,000 ſquare miles will fall to be ſubtracted as abſolutely incapable of cultivation on account of rocky

rocky and inacceſſable mountains, moſſes, woods, rivers, roads, cities, towns, and villages. There remains then 125,000 ſquare miles of land cultivated, and capable of cultivation.

A ſquare mile is ſaid to be 1750 yards every way, which is upwards of 531 acres, conſequently, the 125,000 ſquare miles above mentioned contains upwards of 66,375,000 acres, cultivated, and capable of cultivation. To encourage farmers to come under the burdens after mentioned, we will ſuppoſe them to obtain perpetual leaſes of the lands; and, becauſe of ſome differing circumſtances, not alike applicable to England and Scotland, we ſhall ſpeak concerning each of the Kingdoms ſeparately. And *firſt*, with regard to Scotland, as containing 45,000 ſquare miles, we ſtrike out 5,000 as its proportion of ground that is incapable of cultivation. We admit Scotland to contain 20,000 ſquare miles under the deſcription of infield, 10,000 ſquare miles of outfield, and 10,000 ſquare miles of barren ground, but capable of cultivation.

And conſidering the high rents of the lands in Scotland, we will ſuppoſe at an average that they reach nearly to 5 *per cent.*

on the purchaſe money, (for we ſpeak not at preſent concerning the rich and fertile fields in the environs of populous towns and cities, which, notwithſtanding their advantageous ſituation, have riſen beyond all due bounds,) yet let the whole infield lands in Scotland admit 2 1-half *per cent.* more of rent, which is 3 s. 2 d. Sterling on its purchaſe money, being L.6 : 6 : 4 each acre, the 2 1-half *per cent.* would be for ſome time called a taxation.

Let the whole outfield lands admit 1s.6d. each acre above its preſent rent, which alſo is 2 1-half *per cent.* on its purchaſe money, (being L. 3 Sterling); let the barren grounds alſo, which never paid any thing, after Farmers have been in poſſeſſion for ſeven years without rent, pay thereafter 7 1-half *per cent.* on the purchaſe money, which purchaſe money is L. 1 : 6 : 8 Sterling, and of this 7 1-half *per cent.* we muſt pronounce 2 1-half for ſome time a taxation. And becauſe I am a ſtranger to the ſtate of agriculture in England, as alſo to the general prices of their lands, or rents of the ſame, which, conſidering the far greater fertility and richneſs of the ſoil, may, in price and rents both, be double to that of ours, we will leave the heritors

and tenants of that kingdom, to riſe or fall, on theſe heads, as they ſhall judge proper, and to pronounce what proportion of advance in rent they are fit to endure, as their better judgement ſhall direct them; and therefore, in our ſyſtem, ſhall only adventure to put their ſuperior ſoil on the ſame footing with our beſt lands in Scotland, namely, over the whole kingdom of England to admit 3 s. 2 d. each acre above their preſent rents, for ſometime alſo to be called a taxation; only, we exclude from our meaſure and reckoning in England, 5,000 ſquare miles, as their proportion of land that is incapable of cultivation. The whole of England, and one half of Scotland, is conſidered as infield, in our ſyſtem upon an equal level, incurring the foreſaid tax of 3 s. 2 d. each acre. One fourth part of Scotland is conſidered as outfield, and incurs a tax of 1 s. 6 d. Sterling each acre, and one fourth is conſidered as barren ground, and incurs 8 d. each acre of tax, which is its 2 1-half *per cent.*; the other, 1 s. 4 d. being its preſent rent to the heritor. The whole infield lands of England and Scotland is 105000 ſquare miles, or 55,755,000 acres. The whole outfield lands of Scotland is 10,000

ſquare miles, or 5,310,000 acres, and the whole barren lands of Scotland, that is capable of cultivation, is 10,000 ſquare miles, or 5,310,000 acres. The 2 1-half *per cent.* on each acre, over the whole of the three ſeveral qualities above mentioned, exceeds L. 9,400,000 Sterling. But as no man can define, within an entire trifle, what the real meaſure of the iſland is, on account of the inequality of its breadth, ſo neither can any define the preciſe quantity or number of acres that are in each of the three ſeveral qualities before mentioned, without being liable at leaſt to ſome ſmall errors; muſt therefore conclude, as our ſyſtem undertakes only for L. 8,000000, that a ſurplus of L. 1400,000 Sterling will fill up the void of a few errors. If then the 2 and 1-half *per cent.* over the whole iſland, which we at preſent call a tax, but afterwards a part of the heritors rent, is devoted to the ſole purpoſe of paying the national debt, its full amount upon the two kingdoms being at leaſt L. 8 000000 Sterling yearly, would, by agriculture alone, pay off the laſt ſhilling of the ſaid debt in 35 years, provided that the intereſt were continued to be paid by the ſame means it is at preſent. But as the coun-

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try is ſo depopulated by oppreſſion and emigrations, that theſe meaſures could not ſo ſuddenly be completed, alſo, that the barren lands the firſt ſeven years could afford to pay nothing, therefore it would be needful to make an allowance of two or three years to the 35 above mentioned, to atone for the two forementioned defects.

Again, to make the barren lands go off proportionally with the cultivated lands, it is abſolutely neceſſary, in meaſuring all eſtates, to examine ſtrictly what proportion the barren lands bore to thoſe under cultivation, and cauſe every tenant take a proportionable ſhare of each. For example, where one third part of any eſtate is barren, and two thirds under cultivation, let the tenants, upon this new footing, take 10 acres of barren land for every 20 acres they get of the cultivated lands. The barren lands ought to be divided and diſtinguiſhed into two different kinds; the ſtonny and marſhy ought not to exceed 5 *per cent.* on the purchaſe money, which is 1 s. 4 d. and the better ſort 10 *per cent.* being 2 s. 8 d. Special care ſhould be taken to accommodate all ranks of men, the poor as well as the rich, according to

their

their ſeveral abilities and inclinations; the tradeſman or cottager that may call for 2, 4, or 6 acres, as well as the wealthy farmer that may aſk 100. At ſame time, all diſtinction of infield and outfield ought to be aboliſhed; and none ought to obtain a greater quantity of ground than they are able, or may be enabled in a few years to put into the higheſt ſtate of cultivation. To ſuffer the rich, notwithſtanding their ability, to engroſs extenſive farms, hinders population and tends to oppreſſion.

Again (excepting the wealthy and opulent traders, in populous towns and cities, whoſe trade and circumſtances lift them above the diſtreſſes we complain of,) all elſe of lower rank, eſpecially the poorer ſort of tradeſmen and labourers, ought to dip a little in farming, to ſupply the defects of trade and ſcarcity of work; and notwithſtanding a little farming, even cottagers ought to have ſome calling or trade, to follow the ſame ſo far as to help them to make a little money, to enable them to keep the produce of their little farms entirely for their own families uſe, by making up their rent upon a little trade. The produce of their little farms

would

would render them leſs dependent upon their trades, not having many things to buy; and, by a little trading, they will be leſs damaged in their circumſtances in bad years when crops are defective. Again, by a wiſe and prudent diſtribution of their time, between their farms and their trades, fitting ſome proper portion of time at the one, and exerciſing themſelves in their fields in proper times at the other, they would find very conſiderable advantage in point of health. Thus much with regard to the means of clearing the national debt, —an object of ſuch amazing importance to this country as might render it greatly worth the attention of thoſe in power to permit ſome ſuch meaſures as thoſe to go into execution. But, without a perpetual leaſe, the people muſt utterly ſink under the weight of ſuch an enormous load. There is no internal ſtrength in this country to effect this great buſineſs by any other means. If all the lands in Great Britain were ſold for this purpoſe, it were hardly competent for this great end; but which, if it were accompliſhed by the meaſures we ſo ardently wiſh, all the ſurplus of rents upon the land, called a taxation, ſhould return as additional rent into

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the heritors pockets for ever; which additional rent of 2 1-half *per cent.* on the cultivated lands, together with the 7 1-half *per cent.* on the barren lands, would make the fortunes of the nobility and gentlemen of the nation 1-third greater than they are at preſent.

On the PROVISION *of the* ARMY *and* NAVY *of* GREAT BRITAIN.

WOULD it not be matter of infinite regret, if the Miſtreſs of the deep, this beauteous iſland, ſhould loſe her ſuperiority, or ſink in the eſteem of ſurrounding nations; to prevent which I would exceedingly rejoice to ſee her able to uphold ſuch a force in time of peace as would keep her enemies in awe, and make them tremble to rouſe her juſt indignation; an habitual readineſs and preparation for war is one ſpecial means (under God) to preſerve peace; for this purpoſe, my Lord, I would humbly beg leave to offer my thoughts upon a plan for raiſing L. 1,800,000 Sterling, for the important purpoſe of penſioning in time of peace, the whole of the Britiſh army and ſeamen of the navy, to the number of 200,000 men,

at

at L. 9 Sterling yearly each man. Here again we muſt apply to agriculture, and and lay a tax of 7 d. each acre upon every farm over the whole iſland, which upon the 66,375,000 acres, is fully competent for the above purpoſe. But this would ſuppoſe the whole iſland ſet off in perpetual leaſes, which is ſcarcely to be ſuppoſed all of ſudden; yet I doubt not but in one or two years, two thirds of the whole iſland might be over-run by this new tranſaction, the encouraging nature of the terms, having the national faith in pledge, that they ſhould never be burdened with a ſhilling more, never be removed more, nor their children to lateſt ages while they took care to pay their rents; if then but 1,000,000 was raiſed the firſt or ſecond year to penſion the army, let the filling up of the army, upon this new footing keep even pace, and increaſe with the increaſing fund for the important purpoſe of their ſupport; but I would never intermit the increaſe of the army and ſeamen for the navy, till they arrived to the number of 200,000 effective men.

All young men who had thoughts of the army, ſhould alſo have ſome other honeſt occupation, to aſſiſt their penſion and enable

enable them to live more handſomely in time of peace, as alſo to keep them from worſe employment; likewiſe thoſe intended for the navy might ſail in trading veſſels, but under ſuch needful reſtrictions as government might appoint. Thoſe intended for the army in time of peace, might loſe little more time from their ſecular affairs, than one hour in the day for learning their exerciſe, which might (perhaps) be at their own doors, when in no greater numbers than a ſerjeant's command, once a quarter in companies of an hundred, and once a year a general muſter of the whole troops of a county.

Again, for the more comfortable ſupport of the army in time of peace, each of the ſoldiers ought to have a ſmall portion of land upon the ſame terms as other men, to produce them ſome of the principal neceſſaries of life, ſo that what with a little farming to occupy ſome part of the day, and a little exerciſe at ſome honeſt trade or calling, the reſt of the day, together with their yearly penſion, a ſoldier might live very handſomely; and nothing being ſeen in them, but a decent, comely, and regular deportment, this would endear them to all men, and give the riſing youth,

and

and their parents too, more honourable thoughts of the army, and take off that odium under which that honourable body have too long lain under in this country.

Again, the officers of the army, being gentlemens ſons, we would hope, that if the farmers penſion the private men, theſe gentlemen will find a way to penſion their ſons. In ancient times the ſoldiers profeſſion was eſteemed very honourable, and the profeſſion itſelf conſidered is equally honourable yet; but they have brought themſelves into ſuch diſgrace by their ſcandalous and diſſolute living, that a youth of ſober and decent character rejects the thoughts of the army with ſhame and abhorrence; and few affect the army now-a-days but thoſe who too much incline a looſe and diſſolute life. It is no doubt the duty of all parents to train up their children in the principles and practice of piety and virtue, and to inſtruct them concerning the infinite advantage they ſhall find in chooſing the Lord for their refuge in all ſtates and conditions, but none more ſo than thoſe who may intend the army or navy; their officers ought to be leading examples of all piety and virtue, to be equally induſtrious to promote the know-

ledge and practice of religion and virtue among their troops and ſeamen, as the knowledge of their military diſcipline; to impoſe fines upon the ſoldiers for ſwearing, drinking, Sabbath-breaking, neglect of divine ſervice, and every other immoral practice; to recommend prayer, reading their bibles, daily and duly rewarding and encouraging the moſt religious and virtuous of the common ſoldiers with ſmall advancements; and indeed, in every well governed ſtate, we muſt acknowledge, that merit, or religion and virtue, ought to be the ſole foundation of promotion to every rank and place of power, honour or truſt, whether civil or military, whether in church or ſtate, as thoſe that are moſt faithful to God, will always be moſt faithful to their King and Country. The moſt honourable officer in our army would eſteem it no ſmall honour, to have an audience of his Prince when he pleaſed, and to have free admiſſion into the Royal preſence by night or by day, and preſent his petitions; and will he be aſhamed of ſuch intimacy with his God? Will he almoſt adore his earthly Prince, and be aſhamed of the Prince of the Kings of the Earth? May never ſuch impiety be ſeen more among

among the gentlemen of the ſword. What are all the Princes of Europe but a part of the glittering duſt of his feet? An army ſo diſciplined, when going out to war, might, with good ground of hope, expect the God of armies to go forth with them, and to cover their heads in the day of battle. GENTLEMEN of the SWORD, may I be permitted to mention the juſt foundation of all true valour and bravery. Obſerve (if you pleaſe) the language and ſpirit, the well grounded confidence of the truely noble and illuſtrious youth DAVID, (breathed in the following words) when advancing to the proud champion of the Philiſtenes: "Thou comeſt to me (ſays he) "with a ſword and with a ſpear, and with "a ſhield, but I come to thee in the "name of the Lord of Hoſts, the God "of the armies of Iſrael, whom thou haſt "this day defied; this day will the Lord "deliver thee into my hand, and I will "ſmite thee, and take thine head from "thee; and I will give the carcaſes of the "hoſt of the Philiſtines, this day, unto the "fowls of the air, and to the wild beaſts "of the field, that all the earth may "know that there is a God in Iſrael.— "And all this aſſembly ſhall know, that

" the Lord ſaveth not with ſword and
" ſpear, for the battle is the Lord's, and
" he will give you into our hands."

How worthy alſo of notice by the officers of our army is the charge of God, given to the noble Generaliſſimo of the Jewiſh army. " This book of the law " (ſays he) ſhall not depart out of thy " mouth; but thou ſhalt meditate there- " in day and night, that thou mayeſt ob- " ſerve to do according to all that is " written therein; for then ſhalt thou " make thy way proſperous, and then " ſhalt thou have good ſucceſs.—Have " not I commanded thee;—be ſtrong and " of a good courage; be not afraid, nei- " ther be thou diſmayed, for the Lord " thy God is with thee whitherſoever " thou goeſt."

Again, the conſequent reſolution of this great commander, and his declaration to the ſoldiers, is worthy of moſt particular notice. " And if it ſeem evil unto you " (ſaith he) to ſerve the Lord, then chuſe " you this day whom you will ſerve; but " as for me and my houſe we will ſerve " the Lord." All the affected bravery and ſeeming valour of the gentlemen of the ſword, without this well laid founda-

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tion, is but fool-hardineſs and want of thought. And dying for their country in the bed of honour (falſely ſo called), is dying in the moſt forlorn and wretched ſtate imaginable, if they fall under the ſword of an avenging God for ſin; whereas, if they are in a ſtate of favour and friendſhip with him, and their fortune be to fall in war, as the good king Joſiah, yet, dying in peace with God, their ſtate is ſafe. And if, under a due and univerſal regard to the will of our Almighty ally, in the religious diſcipline of our fleets and armies, and a ſuitable adherence to our duty in other reſpects as a Chriſtian people, we ſhould at any time be unjuſtly invaded, or involved into a war with any of our enemies; if we would know the ſucceſs and event of the war before the ſword is drawn, from the oracles of truth, we may divine it when we pleaſe, namely, the fate of our enemies in that of the proud Aſſyrian, when cauſeleſsly inveſting the walls of Jeruſalem with his numerous army and boaſted power, 2 Kings, ix. 32. "Therefore, thus ſaith the Lord, "concerning the King of Aſſyria, he ſhall "not come into this city, nor ſhoot an "arrow there, nor come before it with

" ſhield, nor caſt a bank againſt it by
" the way that he came, by the ſame
" ſhall he return, and ſhall not come into
" this city, ſaith the Lord. For I will
" defend this city, to ſave it, for mine
" own ſake, and for my ſervant David's
" ſake."

" And it came to paſs that night, that
" the angel of the Lord went out and
" ſmote in the camp of the Aſſyrians an
" hundred and eighty-five thouſand men;
" and when they aroſe early in the morn-
" ing, behold they were all dead corp-
" ſes."

By ſome ſuch encouragements as thoſe before mentioned, of penſion, *&c.* might Great Britain be furniſhed with 200,000 of her braveſt ſons; ſo that that unnatural, unconſtitional practice of impreſſing, ſhould for ever die away.

Some Objections Stated and anſwered, relating to the propriety, juſtice, or equity of Perpetual Leaſes, and other things contained in this Eſſay.

Neb. BUT how is it, that through the whole courſe of your debate, you inſiſt ſo much upon a perpetual leaſe of the lands?

Farm.

Farm. For this reaſon, my Lord, the deſire of a perpetual leaſe is ſo far from being unjuſt, that I ſee not how upon any other footing the farmers could be ſaved from oppreſſion, or from oppreſſing each other without it. The oppreſſion here complained of is, when any of the tenants raſhly and inconſiderately overbids their neighbours beyond all due bounds, and the ſhortneſs of the leaſes and bad ſtate of the ſoil will not enable the tenants to bear up with ſuch rents, which yet, under the encouragement of a perpetual leaſe, a greater rent could be eaſily paid. The doctrine of a perpetual leaſe is ſupported by four reaſons, almoſt invincible; the firſt is, That nothing elſe can exterminate oppreſſion from the landed intereſt, and which is indeed the ſource of almoſt all other oppreſſions. Now, oppreſſion is in itſelf a ſin, and it is ſo much the greater as it oft times draws the oppreſſed into innumerable ſins, which otherwiſe might be avoided, to ſupply their ſtraits by mean and dirty, yea, oft times by criminal ſhifts; and ſin ought to be by all poſſible means avoided, not only as an enemy to the private felicity of individuals, but alſo to the publice welfare and proſperity of the

ſtate.

ſtate. Oppreſſors are grievouſly threatned in ſcripture with perſonal judgments; and when oppreſſion becomes ſo general and univerſal, as to be almoſt beyond the controul of human laws, divine judgements muſt aſſuredly take place, which never ends but in the ruin of the ſtate.—"For the people ſhall be oppreſſed every "one by another, and every man by his "neighbour." Iſa. i. 17. 20. "Seek "judgement, relieve the oppreſſed, judge "the fatherleſs, plead for the widow.—"But if ye refuſe and rebel, ye ſhall be "devoured by the ſword; for the mouth "of the Lord of hoſts hath ſpoken it.

I ſhould be ſorry, my Lord, to ſee the people of Great Britain ſo loſt to the belief of their own principles, as a Chriſtian people, to make it a matter of queſtion, whether a being of infinite perfection and excellency will be as good as his word, or true in his threatnings as well as his promiſes, if oppreſſion is thus threatened?

That ſhort leaſes are oppreſſive, none that underſtands the theory of agriculture will queſtion, in ſo far as they neither leave breathing to the farmer, nor time for means of improvement to the ſoil.—I ſhall illuſtrate this truth by the following example:

example: Your Lordſhip this day has bought a horſe, the remains (perhaps) of a fine horſe, but rather, I ſhould ſay, the ſkeleton of an horſe, nothing remains but ſkin and bone, and bought from the hands of one, who for the ſpace of ſix weeks, by more than double riding, and leſs than half maintenance, has brought him to what he now is; with infinite care and beſt of maintenance, in nine or ten weeks, he begins to look tolerably well. Your Lordſhip now can get a ride, but not finding all that ſatisfaction in him you could wiſh, and reſolving to have no longer leaſe of him than 19 weeks in all, and unwilling that he ſhould go away in better ſtate than your Lordſhip found him, four weeks before the expiration of your intended leaſe, your Lordſhip delivers him over to one of your tormentors, (a carter) with orders to work him night and day, upon half maintenance, until he becomes the ſame ruinated ſkeleton your Lordſhip found him. Look now, my Lord, what notable ſervice this poor animal is like to do his ſucceeding maſters, under the ſame line of conduct, ſome ſuch ſervice may heritors and tenants expect under the preſent œconomy of ſhort leaſes.

A ſecond reaſon, my Lord, in behalf of a perpetual leaſe is this, that, according to the preſent ſtate of agriculture, at leaſt with us in the north parts of Scotland, to reſtore the ſoil to a proper degree of fertility, muſt coſt the tenants a great deal more to improve than it coſt the heritors to purchaſe the ſame. Your Lordſhip muſt be ſenſible, that no heritor can in reaſon expect the tenant to improve the ſoil, but for their own behoof and advantage only; and if they muſt leave it, ſhould, in juſtice to themſelves, leave it as ruinous as they found it. But if the heritors would have their tenants firſt to put the ſoil and then to keep it into a high ſtate of cultivation, is not this good reaſon whereupon to found a perpetuity. It is very obſervable, that few heritors are ſo fond of improving lands they have bought as of buying more; but the reaſon is apparent to all men, namely, that the buying of ſome lands is often found but a trifle in reſpect of its improvement; but the great hardſhip conſiſts in requiring tenants to improve the ſame under a ſhort leaſe, and to claim the benefit of ſuch improvement from the tenant as the heritors right. The hardſhip of ſuch a claim may be ſomewhat

illuſtrated by the following example:— Suppoſe your Lordſhip to lend a poor tradeſman an hundred pieces of ſilver to trade with for the ſpace of 19 years, requiring lawful intereſt for the ſame every year, which is indeed your due. By great induſtry and ſober living he finds himſelf, at the end of the 19 years, poſſeſſed of an hundred pieces of gold. The 19 years being expired, he ſhould now pay you an hundred pieces of ſilver, but your Lordſhip inſiſts upon an hundred pieces of gold, for this ſlender and fallacious reaſon, that it was upon your money he made it; but the ſentence of an impartial judge may convince you of your error, and that he owed you nothing but legal intereſt during the time, and the ſame value in ſtock returned which he at firſt received. The ſame ſentence which holds forth the injuſtice of your Lordſhip's claim of gold inſtead of ſilver, by parity of reaſon, pronounces it equally unjuſt, to demand back a fertile ſoil where barren only was given.

The 3d reaſon, my Lord, for a perpetual leaſe, is drawn from the example of the divine œconomy in thoſe matters among the Jews. So jealous was the Divine Majeſty of that people's oppreſſing one another, when the power

power of oppreſſing fell into their hands, that when bad œconomy or misfortune had mortgaged an inheritance, he would not allow ſuch inheritance to be ſold off for ever; ſo that, to prevent ſuch ſale of perpetuity, and the oppreſſive and ruinous conſequences that muſt attend that family, he appointed every 50 years a year of Jubilee, which year, when it did arrive, every mortgaged inheritance returned back to the former poſſeſſor, ſo that the creditor had no further ſpace to avail himſelf of upon the inheritance ſo mortgaged, but till the year of jubilee did arrive; and no doubt it was the creditor's buſineſs to advance no further in behalf of the debtor than the inheritance was able to replace from the time of ſuch advancements until the year of the jubilee.

Nob. But ſhall we never more have it in our power to make any further advantage of our lands, which would be the event of a perpetual leaſe?

Farm. My Lord, rather ſay, ſhall you never more have it in your power to oppreſs or grind the faces of the poor. You have already taken notice, my Lord, that no man is able to pay ſo good a rent under a ſhort leaſe as under a perpetuity, without

without accomplishing his own ruin, damaging the soil, and, by a constant succession of tenants, ruining it to each others hands.

Nob. We might as well sell our lands altogether as let them out of our power by a perpetual lease?

Farm. Far from it, my Lord. If you sell, you receive no more rent; but, in this case, you receive a greater rent than can be given upon any other footing. Even upon your own plan, you have your lands no longer in your power than a few hours every nineteen years, and after two or three occurrences of this sort, perhaps your Lordship dies, and must leave them to another. And were it not better, my Lord, to set your lands upon such terms, as to have the high approbation of heaven, the love and esteem of all men, upon terms that would greatly increase your fortune, without oppression, and suffer your tenants to live happy under you, and leave it in better condition to your heirs.

Nob. But how would your manner of paying the national debt go on in the event of a war?

Farm. My Lord, if Britain were involved

ved in a war before the debt was paid, there would be a neceſſity of intermitting payments during the war; but then your Lordſhip would ſoon ſee the unſpeakable advantages of theſe new funds, as the eight or nine millions levied yearly for the reduction of the debt, together with the L. 1800,000 Sterling for penſioning the army and navy, would make us ſtrong (under God) to give our enemies warm work during the war.

Nob. But might not an 100,000 men for the army and navy both, under penſion, be eſteemed ſufficient in time of peace, and devote the reſt of the money to aſſiſt in reducing the national debt?

Farm. I cannot agree with your Lordſhip in that, upon ſeveral accounts.

In the firſt place, an 100,000 men is a force noways adequate to the majeſty of the Britiſh empire; for the powers of Europe, (eſpecially our enemies,) will always meaſure, and judge of our real weight and importance according to the number of forces upheld by us in time of peace.

In the ſecond place, the force your Lordſhip ſpeaks of is ſo contemptible, that our enemies will be eternally tampering

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and ready to break with us upon the ſlighteſt occaſions.

In the third place, when the time of need comes, and our forces are inadequate to the taſk, then muſt we have recourſe to the old, hateful, unconſtitutional practice of impreſſing,—dragging Britannia's free-born ſons like ſlaves to the market, or as cattle to the butcher, while parents, brothers, ſiſters, wives, and other relations are pouring out their curſes and imprecations to fall upon the heads of the authors and cauſes of their numberleſs griefs and calamities; and the pretended neceſſities of the ſtate is offered as the reaſon of all this diſturbance; but the neceſſities of the ſtate afford no occaſion for any ſuch diſaſters. The ſtate, declined as it is, is able to penſion more than twice the number. The peaceful farmers alone, if ſuitably encouraged, will decide this great buſineſs for you, and, at 7 d. *per* acre, will penſion 200,000 men, at L.9 Sterling yearly each man.

In the fourth place, my Lord, no maxim can be more falſe than that, namely, to devote the army's intended penſion to aſſiſt in clearing the national debt; for, by the want of a formidable peace eſta-

bliſhment, our enemies will be continually on the watch for ſome pretended reaſon to break with us; ſo that we ſhall be for ever daubling in war, when not only the intended penſion ſpoken of will be engroſſed, but likewiſe all the millions provided for the yearly reduction of the debt muſt wholly be devoted to feed the war; whereas, by a firm and reſolute determination to uphold a powerful army by penſion, even in the moſt profound peace, our peace ſhall find fewer interruptions, and the readier we are for war, we ſhall have the fewer provocations to engage in it; ſo that the ſureſt way to haſten the concluſion of the debt, is to take the beſt concluſions to ſecure a laſting peace.

Nob. How do you inſtruct, that any part of your ſyſtem contains a remedy in ſome meaſure to prevent a vaſt many of thoſe robberies which prevail ſo much in this country.

Farm. My Lord, it is always obſerved, that, at the concluſion of a war, when the army and navy are diſbanded, that robberies become moſt frequent. Many of theſe [illegible] away in their youth, without a trade, [illegible]

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tion, and without principle. Many of their officers, who ought to be equally attentive to their morals as their military diſcipline, to ſuppreſs ſwearing, drinking, Sabbath-breaking, &c. are frequently ring-leaders in all theſe abominations; ſo that, after being long habituated in a looſe and diſſolute life, and at laſt diſbanded, they return home, where, having neither trade nor penſion, nor any means of ſubſiſtence to feed their bodies, and far leſs to feed their vices; and their poor, impoveriſhed, oppreſſed country, not being able to give the half of them work, too many are conſtrained into the highways for robbery, and inglorioufly finiſh their days on an ignominious tree; whereas, if none were appointed their officers but perſons of character and principle, who were equally attentive to their religious inſtruction as their military diſcipline, and, when diſcharged from war, had their penſion awaiting them, the robberies we complain of would greatly ſubſide. So that, by the neglect of a powerful and well-diſciplined army kept in penſion, we may be robbed by our enemies of our poſſeſſions abroad,—by the neglect of the army, of our money on the high-ways at home,—by the ne-

glect of the army, we hang ſo many of their bodies,—by the neglect of the army, we ruin many of their ſouls.

Another grand ſource of robberies is occaſioned by the preſent oppreſſive ſpirit of the times. Many of the farmers of this country are ſo exceedingly harraſſed by each other, and toſſed from place to place, that thouſands of them, with their families, are toſſed out of doors, and may betake themſelves to what trade they pleaſe. Such of them as are yet ſtanding, conſidering the low and ruined ſtate of the ſoil, can ſeldom ſell the neceſſaries of life on ſuch terms as the poor tradeſmen and labourers are able to buy. I ſhall inſtance the caſe of labourers, who, although they had conſtant work, cannot, in the north country, gain above 8 d. a day. While the meal is 1 s. the peck, their whole week's induſtry can only reach 4 pecks. What leſs can a labourer, with a wife, and perhaps three or four children, have during the week. The whole compaſs of his induſtry can reach no more but meal and water. But where ſhall he find cloaths? Where ſhall he find fire to warm their naked ſhivering bodies,—to ſettle their chattering teeth,—to boil the

pot

pot with a peeviſh ſcanty meal? My Lord, they would need to ſteal their cloaths, and ſteal their fire; and, for a houſe, if oppreſſion would leave them leiſure to prepare for another world, they have moſt need of "the houſe appointed "for all living." Now, my Lord, if this be their ſituation when beſt employed, what muſt it be when there is no work, and in the more rigid ſeaſons of the year, when work ceaſes? Words are wanting to expreſs it. Thouſands are conſtrained, no doubt, to ſolicit the cold hand of charity; and their little ones trudging about, from door to door, in wind and rain,—in ſtorm and tempeſt, in queſt of the precarious morſel, to ſatisfy the innocent cravings of nature. But neither will this do. Many whom they ſolicit have as much need as themſelves. What ſhall be done now. Patience expires. The coarſe tie of human laws can no longer bind the unhappy ſufferers. The accumulated oppreſſions under which the country groans, preſſes many of them forward to ſuch a courſe of life as generally leads to an untimely end; and they receive their laſt charities on an ignominious tree?

Neb.

Nob. I dare ſay, your meaſures would effectually prevent emigrations in time to come.

Farm. Your Lordſhip muſt be ſenſible of that; for if the many hundreds, yea, the many thouſands that have emigrated from this country, could have poſſeſſed lands upon this footing, they would never have encountered the expence of paſſage, nor danger of the ſeas, for a precarious living in America. Likewiſe, it is eaſy to deduce by juſt and neceſſary conſequences, that the minds of the people being ſet at eaſe and reſt, and freed from the oppreſſive meaſures under which they have ſo long groaned, nothing could prove a more ſovereign antidote againſt a ſpirit of rebellion; neither could any meaſures contribute more powerfully towards keeping the neceſſaries of life in moderation; for as we muſt ſuppoſe every one (excepting the inhabitants of populous cities and towns) occupying a ſmall field of his own, leſs or more, the greateſt number of the people, having the neceſſaries of life within themſelves, the demand would certainly be far leſs upon the market. It is likewiſe evident to your Lordſhip, that theſe meaſures muſt have a ſpecial effect, towards

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beautifying the country; for, upon this footing, every one would endeavour to outſtrip his neighbour, not only in fertilizing the ſoil, but alſo in adorning their fields with whatever could embelliſh or beautify the ſame, ſuch as incloſures of earth or ſtone, hedges, rows of trees; ſo that poor deſolated Scotland, (in reſpect of what it is at preſent,) would look as the garden of Eden.

Nob. I am perfectly ſenſible, that nothing could give ſuch ample and abundant encouragement to a ſpirit of induſtry as a perpetual leaſe.

Farm. Moſt true, my Lord. It is not eaſy to conceive what difficulties the ſpirit of man would not encounter in the improvement of the ſoil, if, under the influence of ſuch encouragement; and yet it is but reaſon, that what he cannot live to enjoy himſelf, of the fruits of extraordinary induſtry and expence, he might have the chearing proſpect, that his poſterity will enjoy it after him. It is certainly the duty of all men, not only to have reſpect to the comfort and well-being of themſelves and families in their own time, but alſo to uſe their beſt endeavours to hand

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tent to their poſterity. Your Lordſhip can ſee, as well as others, the encreaſing degeneracy of the manners of the times; to prevent the evil conſequences of which, ſecurities are much wanted now, which there was little need for. In your Lordſhip's better days, young heirs ſucceed, leaſes are expiring, many farms and farmers as yet are flouriſhing; but many of theſe unneighbourly oppreſſing mortals, envying the preſent felicity of their neighbours, run to the young and unexperienced maſter, overbids beyond all due bounds, whilſt his unexperience has no other rule by which to form a judgement of the juſt value of his lands, but the offers of theſe envious mortals; the native conſequences that unavoidably follow is, that both predeceſſor and ſucceſſor in theſe farms are involved in one general ruin, their farms run out, and their maſters greatly hurt; yet, we never deem theſe ruinous meaſures juſtly chargeable upon their maſters, till they ſee it in its conſequences, and refuſe a remedy. It is evident then to your Lordſhip, and to all others, that ſhort leaſes is the ſource of oppreſſion, and oppreſſion the mother of almoſt every ſpecies of crime and wicked-

neſs

neſs committed in the land. If there be ſuch a thing as a hard, oppreſſive maſter, here and there in a country, ſhort leaſes gives him too frequent opportunities of accepting the gains of unrighteouſneſs offered by thoſe innumerable ſwarms of locuſts which fly about his palace, upon the report of expiring leaſes; the gain of unrighteouſneſs it ſurely is, when it cannot be paid and live comfortably; when it cannot be paid but by the ruin of their families.

Another evil, my Lord, which follows theſe people in the ruin of each other is, that oft times their ruined poſterity are driven to deſperate and criminal courſes, and diſhoneſt ſhifts, to ſupply their ſtraits. The ſons oft times can hardly find entrance into a way of life into which they could truſt the maintenance of a family. The daughters, not only unportioned and unprovided for, but frequently deſtitute, are ſometimes unduly expoſed to temptation, and frequently ruſh into adulteries and fornications. Hence frequently follow child murders, to hide their ſhame; thefts and robberies are often the unhappy courſes of others, to ſupply their ſtraits; while a numberleſs train of exe-

cutions

cutions endleſs, puts an untimely end to their exiſtence. Hence it is not impoſſible but an oppreſſing farmer, as member of a jury, may bring in his verdict guilty, upon thoſe unhappy creatures, whoſe crimes they were principally acceſſory to by the ruin of their families. And although we dare not ſay that every act of robbery, theft, *&c.* is the reſult of oppreſſion, poverty, and ruined circumſtances, but ſometimes are the effects of evil inclinations within, without any external temptation; yet I am afraid, my Lord, were a cloſe ſcrutiny to be made into the originating cauſes of the moſt that we ſhould find, that the poſterity of tradeſmen, ruined by oppreſſion, of farmers by ſhort leaſes and bad neighbours, labouring people without work, diſbanded ſailors and ſoldiers without penſions, would make up the main body of theſe unhappy people, who, by the oppreſſive ſpirit of the times, are puſhed in ſuch numbers to an untimely end. And now, my Lord, were it poſſible, upon a due inquiry, to trace the footſteps of theſe diſmal effects up to their proper cauſes, and find them to have proceeded as above deſcribed, your Lordſhip will readily acknowledge that it is an affair

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of the firſt moment to provide a remedy, and that an effectual remedy being underſtood, but not applied, for preventing ſo much miſery and deſolation in a State, I leave it with your Lordſhip to determine, what muſt one day follow, if thoſe who have it in the power of their hand to apply the ax to the root of ſo many evils, ſhall yet notwithſtanding decline the ſame.

Nob. I marvel not ſo much at the deſire of a perpetual leaſe, which would no doubt be productive of much good, and preventive of much evil, as I marvel at your bringing the national debt into the queſtion; and by that means keeping back, for the ſpace of 35 years, thoſe benefits which alone could induce the heritors to grant a perpetual leaſe.

Farm. My Lord, the Parliament of Great Britain has concluded, that any intereſt upon money exceeding 5 *per cent.* is oppreſſive,—oppreſſive on the fair trader whoſe profit is not competent to endure more. But it is evident to all men, that trade is more lucrative than agriculture, and at the ſame time far leſs ſlaviſh; and if a higher intereſt than 5 *per cent.* is oppreſſive upon the trader, it follows with

equal reaſon, that a higher return than 5 *per cent.* on money laid out upon lands is equally oppreſſive upon agriculture. Should your Lordſhip obſerve, that the trader is expoſed to loſſes by bad debtors which the farmers need not, the produce of their grounds being always conſidered as a ready money bargain, I muſt beg leave to offer your Lordſhip an obſervation of equal weight, which is this, that the farmer is expoſed to loſſes by bad crops, and commonly his loſſes is attended with far leſs ſympathy; for it is not unworthy your Lordſhips notice, that when a trader fails in payment, and can inſtruct real loſſes as the cauſe of his inſolvency, his creditors are frequently generous enough to give him a diſcharge for ten ſhillings in the pound. I wiſh I could ſay the poor farmers met with equal generoſity in the event of bad crops, although I cannot help thinking, there is rather more reaſon in favours of the tenant upon this account, bad crops being ſent by the hand of heaven for the puniſhment of ſin, of which your Lordſhip will not deny, that great men have their ſhare as well as we; and if great men refuſe the puniſhment of their iniquity, by landing the whole loſs

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and damage of bad years upon the tenants, the reckoning which they ſhun at one time, muſt they not make good at another.

And now, my Lord, having founded our judgements (in the concerns of agriculture) upon the verdict of the Britiſh Senate in a ſimilar caſe reſpecting trade, namely, That a rent on lands exceeding five *per cent.* on the purchaſe money may be equally oppreſſive on agriculture, as an intereſt exceeding five *per cent.* would be on trade, we may certainly conclude, that if the farmers are willing to give two and an half more on the purchaſe money of the lands, partly to obtain the heritors conſent to grant a perpetual leaſe, and partly for this further reaſon, that the two and an half *per cent.* for the firſt thirty-five years may be applied towards the relief of the State, from ſuch an enormous load of debt, I cannot help thinking, my Lord, that I have ſeen many tranſactions frankly concluded with far leſs appearance of equity and reaſon. But there is a further reaſon, my Lord, for concluding the national debt near of kin to theſe funds, which may not be amiſs to offer, and that is, That the proprietors of the landed-in-

tereſt have the greateſt voice in the Houſe of Commons. The voice of incorporated bodies are ſo feeble, and their number ſo ſmall, that they have but ſmall weight there. It neceſſarily follows, that the grand deliberations of that illuſtrious Houſe muſt be chiefly ſwayed by them as the far weightier part; and as they chiefly had, and ſtill have the power, in withholding or granting the neceſſary ſupplies, whether in peace or war, which drew on all theſe millions, we would humbly hope that it will not grate upon their generous diſpoſitions to exerciſe a little patience, till this ponderous load is done away.

It cannot be denied, my Lord, but that the rents of land already (generally ſpeaking) are fully as heavy as the people are able to bear, yea, almoſt inſupportable to many. But from whence does this hardſhip ariſe? From nothing ſo much as the ſhortneſs of the leaſes, and the diſcouragement by that means given to improvement. And if they are thus ſharp to bear, as is experienced at preſent, who needed to wonder, if we ſhould plead, that ſo much of ancient virtue might be ſummoned back, as to grant them two nineteen years upon the preſent terms; yet thirty five

years

years pleaded for the redemption of the State, is not ſo long. If this indulgence then is granted to the farmers, and they, notwithſtanding, for the ſake of a perpetual leaſe, and for the relief of the State, are willing to fall under the two and an half *per cent.* at preſent; if there be any thing of hardſhip in the whole tranſaction, it is they alone muſt feel it. And indeed there is nothing elſe can keep them from ſinking under the weight of their own undertakings, but ſuch an extraordinary degree of improvement, as may only be expected from the encouragements of a perpetual leaſe.

Nob. But what ſhall be done for thoſe tenants, whoſe weakneſs of circumſtances is ſuch, that, although they had perpetual leaſes, are not able to improve to ſuch perfection as to keep them from ſinking under the weight of their own undertakings. If with difficulty they pay the preſent rents, How ſhall they bear up under the two and an half *per cent.* additional?

Farm. My Lord, I cannot help thinking, that, as they have contracted this weakneſs by hard uſage, and hard times, their maſters ought either to give them aſſiſtance, or to procure it for them. It

is greatly their intereſt, my Lord, and perhaps their duty too. It is eaſy to take ſuch ſecurity, and to ſee the money ſo applied as to leave the maſter in no danger. If the tenant ſeeds the ground, and adds the labour of man and beaſt, with ſuch manure as the farm affords, what hazard can attend the maſter, although he grant the moſt powerful aſſiſtance of additional manure that the farm is capable of receiving; and when it is arrived to the higheſt perfection of cultivation it is capable of receiving, then to demand back the granted ſupplies in ſuch proportions yearly as is conſiſtent with the tenant's ſafety.

Nob. I remember you ſome where aſſert, that no eſtate you ever ſaw advertiſed for ſale, where the number of its acres was advertiſed alſo, and the number of each of the three ſeveral qualities of grounds commonly diſtinguiſhed, to wit, infield, outfield, and barren ground; and when you learned the price of the whole eſtate in groſs when ſold, and made a diviſion of the money among the whole acres, according to their ſeveral qualities, you could never find the purchaſe money of an acre of infield to exceed L. 6 : 6 : 8, nor the outfield

outfield above L. 3 Sterling, nor the barren ground above L. 1 : 6 : 8 Sterling each acre, which, at your reckoning, would make the rent of the infield, (at five *per cent.*) 6 s. 4 d. Sterling each acre; and at ſeven and an half *per cent*, would be 9s. 6d. which, with the ſevenpence added for the Army's penſion, would be 10s. 1 d. The outfield acre its five *per cent.* rent, three ſhillings Sterling, and its ſeven and an half *per cent.* rent, 4 s. 6 d. with ſevenpence for the Army's penſion, making 5 s. 1 d.— And the barren ground acre its five *per cent.* rent, 1 s. 4 d. its ſeven and an half *per cent.* rent, 2 s. which, with the Army's 7 d. makes 2 s. 7 d. ſo you would have 10 s. 1 d. 5 s. 1 d. and 2 s. 7 d. to rent theſe three different qualities of acres, the Army's penſion included; and make that a rule to rent the whole country without exception?

Farm. Far from it, my Lord. I only mention ſome few examples of eſtates ſold within my obſervation upon theſe terms, which I can prove when it is required, which prices above mentioned I doubt not may be pretty near to the general run of price, or common value of lands over all the north part of the country at leaſt; the knowledge of which things, when diſcovered

covered, ſhould bear a ſpecial ſway in regulating of rents, and, in the eye of all men of reaſon, will certainly do ſo. Whether your Lordſhip may think the above mentioned rents equitable or not, I ſhall not enquire; but I am confident they will be found ſharp, if not ſevere, upon inland farms, withdrawn from cities and towns, and diſtant from rich manure; and, at the ſame time, in a low ſtate of cultivation. I know numbers of ſober and induſtrious men, occupying farms under 5 s. each acre, that can neither make decent bread to themſelves, nor regular payment of their maſter's rent; yet the reaſon of ſuch diſtreſs is apparent to all men who are willing to ſee, namely, Short leaſes. Men are toſſed about from place to place, and every out-going tenant leaves his farm in a ſtate of abſolute ruin. A ſucceeding tenant finds the half of his ſhort leaſe expired before he has got his farm into any tolerable ſtate. It is but a few crops he dares take off it while in tolerable condition, until (finding a ſecond bargain doubtful,) he runs it back into the ſame ſtate of ruin in which he found it. Thus is the ſoil ruined, at leaſt rendered incapable of doing juſtice to either maſter or tenant.

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The tenant is ruined for want of encouragement to improve, and the ſpirit of induſtry is quite broken and diſcouraged; and, in the oppreſſive ſcuffle, the maſter oft times hurt, or ruined in the end.

An induſtrious farmer, my Lord, has no footing now-a-days. He is ſubjected to every diſcouragement, yea, to puniſhment, which riſes in proportion to his well doing. We will ſtate an example to illuſtrate our aſſertion, an example well known to be ſimilar to his common uſage. He enters with a ruinated farm of 200 acres for 19 years, which coſt his maſter L. 800. Its preſent rent is L. 40 Sterling. He ſinks on this ſhort leaſe L. 400 on its improvement. His expiring leaſe brings an envious brother, a devouring locuſt, to eat up the good of all his induſtry, who offers his maſter L. 20 additional rent. The preſent poſſeſſor meets with as much of tender mercy as to get the firſt offer, upon paying the advanced rent. He renews bargain for 19 years more. His higheſt puniſhment at this time is to pay L. 20 intereſt yearly for the uſe of his own L. 400, lying upon this farm for 19 years more. As he is all induſtry to render his farm ſtill more fertile and compleat, he

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ſinks L. 400 more on its further improvement; and now his farm is the admiration of the whole country. But the unhappy circumſtance of an expiring leaſe brings a ſecond charge of removal. His oppreſſing brother again returns, and offers L. 20 more of additional rent. Our poor old reſidenter is now reduced to the unhappy dilemma, either of paying more for his poſſeſſion than it is really worth, or of leaving all his wealth upon another man's ground;—of paying L. 80 Sterling yearly for that farm which was dear of L. 40 when he entered to it; and, after having laid out as much on its improvement as his maſter on its purchaſe, muſt finiſh the remainder of his days in poverty and want. This, my Lord, is the common puniſhment, and the common uſage of an induſtrious man; while, on the other hand, a ſluggard wants not his reward, but is ſure of encouragement in proportion to his ſloth. As he improves not, his farm makes no appearance. When his leaſe expires, no man covets his poſſeſſion. His maſter dares not raiſe his rent, for neither himſelf, nor any other, would pay it. If his maſter promiſes it for 19 years more, he can promiſe it to his poſterity

ſterity for 1900, if they be wiſe enough to follow the ſame line of conduct. To pay their rent, and preſerve to themſelves a miſerable ſubſiſtence is all they ſhould ſtudy; and, in the extreme of ſloth, lies all their ſecurity. But I return to anſwer the queſtion implied in your Lordſhip's laſt words, namely, Whether I thought 10s. 1d. each acre for infield, 5s. 1d. for outfield, and 2s. 7d. for barren ground, ſhould be a general rule over the whole country.

I anſwer, my Lord, as formerly, far from it, except in the caſe of inland parts, or farms at a diſtance from cities and towns, or rich manure, and their ſtate of cultivation low; in either of theſe caſes, the forementioned rents may be found abundantly ſharp. But wherever lands may ly, or however remote from any needful advantages for improvement, if there is any where to be found a ſtrong, fertile, and rich ſoil, or grounds in the neighbourhood of populous cities and towns, where ſuch productions, roots, or other vegetables are wanted, as may be four, five, or ſix times the value of the common productions of country farms, whatever men can afford to pay for ſuch

grounds

grounds under a leaſe of one or two 19 years, and retain a comfortable ſubſiſtence for themſelves, whether the rents of ſuch favourably circumſtanced grounds may be one, two, three, or more pounds each acre, whatever men will give for ſuch grounds under a tolerable length of leaſe; and they will always give more for a perpetual leaſe: And let men pay, or ſtrain to the higheſt pitch that human induſtry can reach under a leaſe of tolerable length, and they are ſtill able to exceed under a perpetuity; and the reaſon is evident, the poſſeſſor of ground under any leaſe of tolerable length, has always a jealous eye towards the end of it, if not for himſelf, at leaſt for his poſterity, leaſt ſome unjuſt, oppreſſive invader, ſhould find means to ſupplant either him or his children, and deprive them of the benefits of a long courſe of great induſtry; and the greater their induſtry the more their damage in the end. In the event of their removal, this conſideration checks them in the progreſs of their improvement, and diſpoſes them to proceed but a certain limited length, leſt a heavier ruin attends its concluſion. But a perpetual leaſe removes all ſuch jealouſies, gives all fears to the wind;

wind; and fears nothing ſo much as to come ſhort one degree of the higheſt perfection of cultivation that the ſoil is capable of receiving. This rouſes the ſpirit of induſtry to the higheſt pitch, gives it the moſt ample encouragement, and faireſt of play. Under this the ſober, honeſt, and induſtrious man, ſhall always ſucceed. No diſappointment or defeat can check his honeſt career; and nothing but prodigality, ſloth, or bad œconomy, can entail ruin upon him or his poſterity.

Nob. But would the ample encouragements of a perpetual leaſe afford no greater advantage to the heritors than the two and an half *per cent.* ſo oft ſpoken off, which, above the current rents, (according to your account) is only 3 s. 9 d. each acre upon infield, 2 s. 1 d. upon outfield, and 1 s. 3 d. upon barren ground, of riſe, even the Army's penſion included?

Farm. My Lord, hitherto I have ſpoken according to the ſentiments of the moſt judicious and experienced within the circle of my acquaintance; but their voices cannot be pronounced the voice of the nation. But whether the general voice of the nation ſhould riſe above, or fall below this proportion, one thing your Lordſhip

will always be ſure of, to wit, The higheſt rents, under a perpetuity, will always ſee the moſt flouriſhing farmers, and always behold the moſt improven ſoil. And the reverſe of this will be equally evident under the œconomy of ſhort leaſes. Their oppreſſive effects will ruin the ſoil, will ruin the people, depopulate your countries, and drive the inhabitants, in hundreds and in thouſands, away to foreign States. But ſuppoſing your Lordſhip were half a proſylite to our ſyſtem, this ought always to have a place in our conſiderations, that the man of induſtry has always a title to a comfortable ſubſiſtence; yea, his uſage is injurious, partial, and oppreſſive, if a preſent ſubſiſtence is all he can reach. He has a right to ſave. The education of his children, the advantageous ſettlement of ſons in buſineſs to do for themſelves, the portioning of daughters, either for ſupport in their maiden ſtate, or to recommend them to ſuitable and advantageous matches, the ſupport of himſelf in old age, when ability and ſtrength for work ſhall fail him, abſolutely require it. Theſe things premiſed and allowed, your Lordſhip (if pleaſed) might examine your grounds, might call in men

of

of the greateſt integrity, judgement, and experience in theſe matters. Of theſe men, ſome in behalf of your Lordſhip, and ſome for the tenants. Theſe ſhould be deeply ſworn to ſtrict impartiality, and due regard to the welfare of both parties, as they ſhould be able to anſwer at the dread Tribunal; ſhould ſtrictly examine all the different qualities of the ſeveral grounds, their natures, preſent ſtate of cultivation; their differing advantages or diſadvantages, in their acceſs to improvement; and having duly weighed all circumſtances needful upon which to form their judgements, ſhould proceed to give judgement upon every differing field; their rents, each acre, according to their differing qualities, which might be pronounced thus: By naming the higheſt rent they could bear under a leaſe of one or two 19 years; and then pronouncing how much more they could poſſibly bear for the ſake of a perpetuity. And if this twofold committee ſhould differ a little in their own judgements, each ſhould have power to chuſe a perſon of their own *quorum* to act in quality of arbitrators; but if the two arbitrators ſhould differ a little betwixt themſelves, they ſhould have

power to nominate one perſon out of the whole to paſs the final ſentence. This, my Lord, is the true method to make the beſt of your lands at once that ever they ſhall be able to produce, either to your Lordſhip, or to your lateſt poſterity. Let not that wretched vulgar conceit ever have place in your noble breaſt, which I have frequently heard, that there may be harm in a perpetual leaſe to heritors, on this account, that if any new or extraordinary methods of improvement were in future diſcovered, that might conſiderably increaſe the value of their lands, a perpetual leaſe would cut them off from ſuch advantages as this might afford them. This conceit, my Lord, is ſomewhat like the dog in the fable. Swimming a-croſs the river with a piece of beef in his teeth, but perceiving (his own ſhadow) another dog, as he thought, under water, with a bit of the ſame kind in his teeth, he, greedily graſping at the other's prize, lets go his own. Graſping at the ſhadow, he loſeth the ſubſtance. To confute this groundleſs conceit juſt now mentioned, a little reflection will convince your Lordſhip, that ſhort leaſes will bar the door againſt all ſuch ſuppoſed advantages, and, as already

ſaid,

ſaid, will ruin the ſoil, impoveriſh the people, drive them out of the kingdom, and make your lands of leſs conſequence than they are at preſent.

Will a man, living by hard labour and induſtry, if ſtarved for weeks and ſickened with famine, reſtored with cordials another diviſion of his time, well-fed a third time, alternately ruined and reſtored again, —will a conſtant round of ſuch deſtructive extremes through life, render his labours ſo beneficial to himſelf and family, as the labours of that man who is well fed and nouriſhed through the whole of his life? Aſſuredly not. In a perpetual leaſe, therefore, lies your Lordſhip's greateſt advantage, as well as your tenants; and as it is full of advantage to both parties, ſo alſo is it full of reaſon. There is not an acre of infield in a low ſtate of cultivation but will require nearly its value to reſtore it to a proper ſtate. There is not an acre of outfield but will take twice its price to improve it properly; nor an acre of barren ground but will take ſix times its price for its ſuitable improvement. If then your Lordſhip purchaſe this infield at little more than L. 6 Sterling, and I lay out almoſt its price on its improvement;

if you purchaſe your outfield acre at L. 3, and I lay out L. 6 on its improvement; if you purchaſe barren ground at L. 1 : 6 : 8, and I improve it at the expence of L. 8 Sterling;—if, upon ſuch eaſy terms, your Lordſhip is made proprietor for ever, and I, upon ſuch expenſive terms of improvement, ſo far exceeding its real value, can only poſſeſs it for one or two nineteen years, Is there a ſhadow of reaſon, juſtice, or equity, in ſuch a tranſaction?—Will this accord with the golden precept of our divine Redeemer, "Whatſoever ye would "that men ſhould do unto you, do ye "even ſo unto them?" Was not my improvement money as much mine as your Lordſhip's purchaſe money was yours before we jointly laid them on theſe grounds? With what indignation would your Lordſhip reprobate that lawleſs and tyrannic power who would require you to renounce theſe grounds, and relinquiſh your juſt and heritable right, without returning your purchaſe money; and if I muſt remove from your Lordſhip's grounds, is not my title and right equal, by parity of reaſon, to demand back my improvement money? Your Lordſhip, in buying lands which cannot produce without improvement,

provement, buys, as it were, the body of a dead man, who is capable of no action without life. Our improvement money comes in, and in concurrence with the dew of heaven, which is free to all, inſpires the dead ſoil with, and nouriſhes vegetable life; and as the body of a dead man is of no moment without life, ſo neither is the ſoil without improvement.

The naked and bare exiſtence of a barren field can be of no value to your Lordſhip, nor others, without improvement. Whoever then ſhall improve and fertilize this barren field, adds far more to its real value than your Lordſhip, who only could produce it under a barren exiſtence.

From what has been ſaid, your Lordſhip will eaſily perceive the reaſonableneſs, juſtice, and equity of a perpetuity. Perhaps neither your Lordſhip, or even your factors, ever ſtudied to enter into, or take any ſuch comparative view of the difference in point of expence, between the purchaſe of ground and its improvement; and therefore there may be much innocence on your Lordſhip's part and theirs under ſome error, ſo long as thoſe circumſtances are unknown, which only can enable to diſtinguiſh between error and truth. There

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is nothing I could more earneſtly wiſh than that your Lordſhip, and every other proprietor of land, might at once enter into every poſſible advantage, by your grounds, that is conſiſtent with your joint proſperity, and that of your farmers. The great Author of Nature, who had the comfort and happineſs of all his creatures, of poor and rich equally in his view, has ſo wiſely ordered matters, that if one part of mankind ſhall, either by ſlight or might, ſubtract from the comfort or happineſs of the other, to make their own ſuperabundant; they may enjoy, or ſeem to enjoy, the forbidden advantage for a time, but the meaſure will bitter'ere long, back on themſelves recoil; and by how much they have exceeded, by partiality, in their own favours, by ſo much the more, in the end, ſhall they find themſelves wanting in that, which otherways would have been found their juſt right; and therefore it is my moſt fervent deſire, that your Lordſhip, and all others in power, may enter into ſuch meaſures for the relief of this diſtreſſed country, as may be abundantly productive of the ſo much deſired effects; as may not only relieve them from their oppreſſive, and inſupportably

public burdens as a State, but alſo, as may relieve them from their private diſtreſſes and calamities as individuals, and diffuſe univerſal happineſs and proſperity through the whole body of the people.

The prophet Iſaiah having given a moſt pitiful deſcription of the uncommon corruption and depravity of the Jewiſh State, ſo entirely corrupted, that, from the ſole of the foot to the crown of the head,— from the moſt inferior ſubject, aſcending through every other rank, to the throne itſelf, there was no ſoundneſs, but wounds, bruiſes, and putrifying ſores,— ſores,— neither cloſed, nor bound up, nor molified with ointment; not one wholeſome, or effectual remedy had hitherto been applied; their country deſolated and depopulated by oppreſſion within, and by the enemy without; their land devoured in numberleſs reſpects, as if by a general conflagration, or by the ſword of the public foe. What ſhall be done in this extremity?— Will not a public acknowledgement of guilt, in a day of humiliation, with ſolemn lifting up of their hands, in prayer for forgiveneſs, partial amendment for a time, after which, reſerving to themſelves the liberty of returning like a dog to the vomit,

mit, by oppreſſion and other acts of violence, until blood toucheth blood. No, ſays the prophet, He will not hear you, as your hands are full of blood. Wherein then conſiſts the remedy? Why, waſh ye, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; ceaſe to do evil; learn to do well. Theſe are general precepts, the grand and comprehenſive import of which muſt be attended to by the whole people. But, (ſays the prophet,) I have a ſpecial word of commiſſion to rulers, judges, and all elſe of eminent place and ſtation. What is it? Why, ſeek judgement, relieve the oppreſſed, judge the fatherleſs, plead for the widow. But we have perſiſted ſo long in our rebellious courſes, (ſay the people) that we can ſcare expect forgivenneſs. Far from it ſays the prophet. Hear the voice of your benignant Creator. Come now and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord. Though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be white as wool; though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as ſnow. But what ſhall be the conſequence, if either we willingly attend to this our duty, or, if we refuſe it and rebel, ſay they? If you be willing and obedient (ſays He) you

ſhall

ſhall eat of the fat of the land. But if ye refuſe and rebel, ye ſhall be devoured by the ſword; for the mouth of the Lord of Hoſts hath ſpoken it.

So that, if ever a reformation takes place, my Lord, either in our public meaſures, or in our private lives and converſations, that will be acceptable to the divine Majeſty, or even available to ſave us from inevitable deſtruction, to relieve from every oppreſſion muſt be our firſt work.

Nob. But if perpetual leaſes were granted, and no concern taken with the national debt, What might be the conſequence?

Farm. Not quite favourable, my Lord, although it might ſoften our private deſtreſſes for ſome time; yet, while the public ſafety is unregarded, while we are unable either to preſerve peace, or to ſupport war or private felicity, ſtands upon a very precarious foundation; and by this ill-judged parſimony, we may loſe our all, and find good time for repentance when it cannot profit. But, my Lord, if the virtue of the nation is ſo far gone in a decline, that we could not expect its acquieſcence in a meaſure propoſing ſuch rapid relief, we ſhould by all poſſible means endeavour to pleaſe, and ſay, concerning the

two

two and an half *per cent.* for reducing the debt, Let the one half go into the pockets of the heritors, and the other half to the relief of the ſtate; by which means, a nobleman of L. 20,000 yearly rent this ſeaſon, might, one or two years hence, enter with L. 5000 more. A ſquire of L. 1000 this year, might, at that ſame period, enter worth L. 250 more, and all others in proportion to the ſize of their fortunes. Upon this plan, the national debt would require three ſcore and ten years to diſcharge; at the end of which time our before mentioned eſtates would riſe again; the one L. 5000 more, and the other L. 250, and all others in proportion.

Another moſt ruinous, deſtructive, and oppreſſive practice upon the landed intereſt is, the engroſſing of farms, a practice taken notice of by the celebrated Dr Price, as greatly inſtrumental, in the ſmall compaſs of 12 years, to the diminiſhing the inhabitants of Great Britain to the number of 200,000. How lamentable, my Lord, to ſee a dozen or twenty cottager families driven out, to make way for one or two opulent gentlemen farmers. To look abroad over a vaſt extent of country,

try, and ſcarce perceive two or three ſmoking chimnies, where 20 or 30 have been ſeen before. I know no reaſon can be offered in juſtification of this meaſure, excepting this alone, that theſe opulent and wealthy tenants make far more rapid advances in the progreſs of improvement, by means of their great wealth, and their rents generally well paid; but if theſe little cottagers were properly encouraged and ſupported, their little ſpots of ground might be as well improven, and their rents as well paid as the others. Neither have we a right, my Lord, to drive out, cruſh, or oppreſs theſe poor and needy ones, notwithſtanding the ſmall trouble of ſupporting or aſſiſting to put them in a fair and proſperous way to do for themſelves. It is for this end, that Providence has diſperſed ſuch various and different lots among men, that they be uſeful to each other; that the rich may have the opportunity of imitating the godlike bounty of the great Creator. And as in this reſpect the poor cannot render themſelves independent of the friendſhip, bounty, magnificence of the rich; ſo neither have the rich the means of ſupporting their grandeur, pomp, and magnificence, without

the labours of the induſtrious poor. It is from this wiſely ordered, but various lots of mankind, all the duties of the Chriſtian life ariſe. And as this practice of engroſſing farms is ruinous to the poor as individuals, ſo it is equally injurious to the public welfare and proſperity of the State. It deprives the State of a moſt important ſource of landmen for the Army, and ſeamen for the Navy upon the commencement of a war. How eaſy is your acceſs to a ſupply of men from thoſe humble abodes, when compared with the difficulties you muſt meet with from your rich and wealthy people; and if Government is conſtrained, by the want of men, to have recourſe to violent meaſures for ſupplying the ſame, who have we to blame, or what but our own ruinous and impolitic meaſures, in exterminating thoſe uſeful and induſtrious people from our country, by dire oppreſſion and conſtant emigration, that are ſo abundantly uſeful both in peace and war.

Solomon ſays, "In the multitude of "counſellors there is ſafety" May we not ſay, with equal truth, In the multitude of people there is ſafety, yea more, there is profit and advantage. Is not a

numerous

numerous and proſperous people, our wealth in trade, and, under God, our ſtrength in war? How melancholy the account of us from any other ſtate in Europe? The inhabitants of Great Britain ſunk to ſeven or eight millions, and France increaſed to twenty five; the greater ſtill increaſing; the leſſer always decreaſing. Unto what ſhall theſe different tendencies arrive at laſt? Our public debts equal to the heritable right of all the lands in Great Britain. Many millions of its acres, that are capable of cultivation lying, like a deſolate wilderneſs, in want of men, and ſuitable encouragement to improve the ſame,—a country, if well improven, capable of maintaining thirty millions of ſouls, yet ſcarce containing a fourth of that number. Will your Lordſhip ſay, Incredible, impoſſible! What rational evidence can be offered in ſupport of this? I anſwer, The iſland exceeds ſixty millions of acres, cultivated and capable of cultivation. Admit two acres as competent to anſwer all the neceſſities of each perſon; theſe two acres improven to perfection, the one in graſs, the other in grain, the produce of the acre under grain will as far exceed the neceſſities of a ſingle perſon

as, over the whole iſland, will anſwer the demand for horſes, and for every other uſe which the country may require; and if diſtilleries, breweries, horſes, &c. ſhould engroſs the one half, yet the other would be competent for the human ſpecies, was the country properly improven, and ſuitable encouragement given for that purpoſe. But let us grant, my Lord, that this computation were a little aſide, whether to the right hand or to the left, yet this could be no objection to the propriety of thoſe meaſures, which tend ſo exceedingly to enrich both the ſoil and its inhabitants, by giving every poſſible encouragement for theſe important ends. Will your Lordſhip ſay, What are the means? I anſwer, Aboliſh ſhort leaſes, introduce perpetual leaſes, or for ſome ſuch number of years as are almoſt equivalent. Theſe are the means which fall under the deſcription of ſecond cauſes. The great firſt cauſe of all proſperity, and every other bleſſing, whether perſonal or national, is the divine favour; and, my Lord, although we can do nothing to merit this, yet we may throw ourſelves in the way wherein it is to be found. Such is the divine benignity and goodneſs of the great

Creator, that he will not leave a mind of ſincere endeavour to paſs unrewarded. What then remains beſt? That your Lordſhip, and others in high ſtation and power, take the neceſſary ſteps to ſtir up a more vigorous exertion of the civil power, to ſtem that torrent of vice and immorality which hath broken in upon theſe kingdoms, and to give every poſſible encouragement to piety and virtue. In the endeavouring to bring the people back again to a due and reverential regard to the worſhip and ſervice of the great Creator, from whom we have ſo long and ſo deeply revolted; and in order to put life, ſpirit, and activity in magiſtrates, judges, and rulers, for enforcing a due regard, not only to the laws of the land, but alſo to every divine law and ordinance: That your Lordſhip and others would uſe your utmoſt and beſt endeavours to obtain a commiſſion of men fearing God, men of truth, and hating covetouſneſs, to preſide over the conduct of all the ſeveral ſubordinations of thoſe that bear rule, in order to produce the great effects above mentioned.

All this, my Lord, is nothing but due conformity to the pious purpoſe and royal

proclamation of our moſt gracious Sovereign, to the grand import of which, if we did duly attend, by a returning back, and cloſer adherence to our Almighty ally, and in a due obſervance of his righteous laws, the armies of Great Britain might beat their ſwords into plough ſhares, and their ſpears into pruning hooks. No weapon formed againſt them ſhould ever proſper, neither needed they to learn the arts of war any more; but might ſit abundantly happy, every man under his vine, and under his fig-tree.

Nob. But might not a long leaſe give almoſt as much ſatisfaction as a perpetuity?

Farm. Yes, my Lord, provided that you did allow ſuch a number of years into that leaſe as might be ſuppoſed to run parallel with the date of creation, and the final conſummation of all things; as the very intent of the ſame is to prevent the ſin of oppreſſing, and the miſery of being oppreſſed. But the voice of a refuſal is ſtrongly expreſſive of a diſregard to the welfare of future poſterity, ſtrongly expreſſive of a moſt violent attachment to a ſpirit of oppreſſion, and which is a moſt heinous and God-provoking ſin. Let

"therefore your Lordſhip's bounty to your fellow creatures bear ſome proportion, or likeneſs to the great Creator's bounty, manifeſted to your Lordſhip. Let not that miſery find acceſs to your grounds in future ages which your Lordſhip is ſo abundantly able, by one potent deed, for ever to diſcharge at preſent. This ſtate your Lordſhip well knows is but probationary. In order to another, the one half of life is paſt 'ere we be aware of its great end and meaning. The other half is all uncertainty. Not one moment ſure. What pity then, my Lord, and what infinite cauſe of regret, when your Lordſhip is gone hence, and is no more in time, that, by a falſe ſlip of inadvertence in your Lordſhip, poſterity ſhould find an opportunity to oppreſs, and rend each other to pieces upon your Lordſhip's grounds, which you could eaſily have prevented, to your immortal honour. Give them fair play then, my Lord, for life. You have it in your power juſt now to take ſuch meaſures as will break the jaws of the wicked in after ages, and keep the ſpoil out of their teeth. Deliver the poor then, my Lord, as a roe from the hunter. They have to run for the Crown incorruptible; and as their

Redeemer

Redeemer is mighty, he will deliver your Lordſhip from a far more formidable enemy, who goes about night and day ſeeking whom he may devour. Let not oppreſſors in after days overload whom your Lordſhip can ſave. Oppreſſion in the extreme drowns men in earthly cares. They muſt riſe early, ſit late, and eat the bread of ſorrows; and are often undone by exceſſive want in labouring to enable others to undo themſelves by exceſſive abundance. Be it then your Lordſhip's ſtudy, to alleviate the miſeries, and promote the happineſs of all around you, as knowing yourſelf ſtrictly accountable for the management of that great fortune with which your Almighty Benefactor hath entruſted you, not as its proprietor for ever, but as its ſtewart for a time. Frequently take a walk, in ſerious meditation, upon the ſolemn ſilent ſhore of that vaſt ocean you muſt ſail ſo ſoon. Examine the real value of the good things of time from the thoughts you will have of them in your expiring moments, and what you would do for the honour of God in the day of ſickneſs and death. Eſteem it your higheſt wiſdom to do for Him in the day of proſperity and health. Wherein lies the

wiſdom,

wiſdom, my Lord, of being cloſe handed in thoſe matters, that would ſo exceedingly conduce to the honour of Him, on whom we depend for all we hold dear. Men are wonderful ambitious of gainful offices, honourable ſtations, and high degrees of the royal favour of earthly Princes; and, Were it not equally wiſe to cheriſh the noble ambition of ſtanding high in the favour of heaven, wherein lies the wiſdom of learned and great men, to controvert a doctrine ſo full of happineſs to others, without abridging their own, while, at the ſame time, thoſe earthly benefits, or means of happineſs, ſhall be equally deſerted by both parties a few years hence; and who can tell, but, or ſo many days, the ſhafts of death fly as thick around the palaces of Princes, and great men, as our humble cottages. According to that important paſſage, quoted from the Grave, "Death's ſhafts fly thick. "Here falls a village ſwain, and there "his pamper'd Lord." The cup goes round, and who ſo artful as put it paſt him. How unceremonious is the King of Terrors, making no apologies for his rudeſt attacks upon the perſons of Princes, climbing in like a thief at the windows of

their noblest palaces, by night as well as day. Should any great and invincible conqueror, whose integrity, uprightness, and royal bounty was equal to his greatness; should such a one give your Lordship the fullest assurance and most undoubteed right to the possession of a kingdom, upon the sole condition of standing by his side, in subjection to his laws, humane to his soldiers, fighting valiantly under his banner, and enduring all the hardships of the field for one single campaign, Would not your Lordship think it an easy conquest upon such terms? The Prince of the kings of the earth is this Mighty Conqueror, your Lordship's life is the compain, which being spent as above in fighting valiantly under his banner against your joint enemies, enduring all the hardships of the field of the most self-denying duties that his laws can require respecting either his royal Person, your fellow soldiers, or your self. In which event, he offers your Lordship a kingdom which cannot be moved. Such is your Lordship's pious and unblameable life in other respects, that even the prying eye of envy, nor the tongue of slander know not where to fix. But if some

part

part of the genuine meaning of an important and divine precept ſhould ſay, "One "thing thou lackeſt," which would exceedingly conduce to the happineſs of the whole people; would raiſe to competency, all that are depreſt under the extreme of poverty, would make the great ſtill greater; their fortunes far more ample; their names far more illuſtrious; would diffuſe univerſal happineſs through every member of the body politic; would raiſe the declined State from much of preſent miſery, to the higheſt pinnacle of earthly proſperity; would make your deſolated and depopulated country beautiful as Eden garden, and her people numerous as the ſtars of heaven. Would your Lordſhip heſitate? I know you would not. Try then, my Lord, this doctrine of perpetuity. Bring it to the touchſtone of that important precept, "Whatever you "would that men ſhould do unto you, "do ye ſo even unto them." When heaven and earth are paſſed away, when all the world is in flaming fire; when the earth, with all its works, are burnt up, He will ſupport the dignity of this precept, will magnify and make it honourable, to the inexpreſſible terror of all who have oppoſed

oppoſed the ſame. Are ſhort leaſes, then, productive of oppreſſion? Is oppreſſion ſin, and threatened with national judgements, from which there is no reſcue, but by reclaiming from ſuch evils? And in the whole of our tranſactions with mankind, to keep a ſteady eye to thoſe branches of duty, ſeek judgement, relieve the oppreſſed, judge the fatherleſs, plead for the widow. Are perpetual leaſes big with relief, relief from the ſin, and from the miſery, from the guilt, and from the puuiſhment? If ſo, How then, my Lord, can his tenants at will, the Lords of the univerſe, deny the Lord of angels ſo reaſonable a requeſt? Is it not their duty, their intereſt, their higheſt honour, to act in concert with Him. Came he to ſave from miſery, and to offer the poſſeſſion of a parmanent, durable, everlaſting felicity? He hath furniſhed your Lordſhip with power, in your own ſphere, to follow the ſame illuſtrious example. But whom came he to ſave from miſery, and to inſtal into ſuch happineſs? His friends, and thoſe without whom He could not ſupport his Dignity and State? No, but his enemies, and thoſe who ſought his life. His enemies in the field, and in proud rebellious

rebellious arms. Did their requital of ſo much evil, for ſo much good, fill him with reſentment and indignation. To learn this, look at the laſt prayer of this Almighty Sufferer. "Father forgive them, "for they know not what they do."

For whom then doth this meek and patient prince of peace ſolicit your Lordſhip's favour in theſe words: "Relieve the op-"preſſed?" Is it for your enemies or thoſe who ſought your life? No; but your friends, your poor brethren, and thoſe without whoſe induſtry your Lordſhip could not uphold your pomp and ſtate, nor even ſo much as continue in exiſtence. But what doth the Lord of life plead in their their behalf at your Lordſhip's hands? Is it to die for your friends, as he did for his enemies? No; but to ſuffer them to live, to ſave them from each other, and to enable them to partake of all the bleſſings of the bounteous hand of heaven; to diſpenſe with ſomething from the lap of luxury, that they may abound with all things neceſſary; that the poor may be able to feed, to cloath, to educate their children, to furniſh them with callings, to ſupport themſelves with decency and honeſty, and that ignorance and ungodli-

neſs, idleneſs and ſlavery, may not over-run the whole land; that their poor parents may not be oppreſſed and over-loaded with the cares of this life, in riſing early, ſitting late, and eating the bread of ſorrow, fighting themſelves out of breath in gathering together the gains of oppreſſion for others, but to ſuffer them by all means to have a calmer paſſage through life, to have leiſure to converſe with their children on things pertaining to the kingdom of God, and to inſtruct them in the great and momentous concerns of a future life and an eternal ſtate; and, amidſt all the hurry and buſtle of the trivial affairs of time, not to forget the one thing needful, the better part, which, if duly attended to and once ſecured, ſhould never be taken from them. All theſe things pleaded in their favour, my Lord, is their due, not only from motives of pity and compaſſion, but alſo from the uniform language and unerring dictates of right reaſon. All the ſolid grandeur of the Britiſh nation takes its riſe upon the joint induſtry of theſe laborious ones, and without which, what were all your ſeveral beautiful countries but ſo many barren deſolate fields of famine? It is written

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in ſcripture, "Thou ſhalt not muzzle the "ox that treadeth out the corn." Doth God take care for oxen, or doth he not ſay ſo for our ſakes, and for our inſtruction, intimating ſo much, that the laborious part of mankind, by whoſe induſtry the whole is upheld, ought by no means to be ſtrangers to thoſe ſweets they are preparing with ſuch aſſiduity for others. How uncomfortable is it, my Lord, to ſpend the whole of life in labouring to prepare the cup of unmixed pleaſure (were it poſſible) for others, and that they ſhould, with greedineſs, drink ſo deep as to leave little elſe at bottom but wormwood and gall for their ſervants. May it then be the conſtant ſtudy of all whom it may concern, or of all, without exception, whom the divine providence may put it in their power, to follow the example of that illuſtrious ancient, Job: "When the "ear heard me then it bleſſed me, and "when the eye ſaw me then it gave wit-"neſs to me; becauſe I delivered the "poor that cryed, and the fatherleſs, and "him that had none to help him. The "bleſſing of him that was ready to periſh "came upon me, and I cauſed the wi-"dow's heart to ſing for joy. I put on

" righteouſneſs, and it cloathed me. My " judgement was as a robe and a diadem. " I was eyes to the blind, and feet was I " to the lame. I was a father to the " poor, and the cauſe which I knew not " I ſearched out; and I brake the jaws " of the wicked, and plucked the ſpoil " out of his teeth" Who would not, my Lord, ſtudy to follow ſuch a godlike example, to gain the high, the divine approbation that follows Job, " Haſt thou " conſidered my ſervant Job, that there " is none like him in all the earth, a per- " fect and an upright man, one that " feareth God and eſcheweth evil, and " ſtill he holdeth faſt his integrity."

Nob. Whatever of juſtice or equity may be found in theſe your ſentiments, yet I am afraid they ſhall fall into diſeſteem with the generality of people, from a too large intermixture of ſcripture quotations and religious phraſes; and your ſyſtem of public meaſures become the ſubject of laughter upon that account.

Farm. I have no great apprehenſions of that, my Lord, except from athieſts or infidels, and the ſentiments or laughter of theſe are not worth our notice. Let theſe prepoſterous fools prove firſt that there is

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no God, no future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, no traces of the being and perfections of an infinite Majeſty in the Scriptures, nor any footſteps of his wiſdom, power, and goodneſs in the works of creation; then may we accord in ſentiments with them, and join the athieſtical laugh.

Nob. I am afraid that would be aſſigning them too hard a taſk?

Farm. But theſe points, my Lord, unproven by them, proves at once their own madneſs and folly. For the very poſſibility, that there may be a God, will be ſufficient to determine any wiſe man to embrace that belief as his ſafeſt and ſureſt ſanctuary. For let us grant for a little all the Athieſt could wiſh, namely, That there were no God; yet, where could the danger be to a virtuous and religious man when he dies? But, if there is a God, Where ſhall the Athieſt and Infidel appear? But it is the intereſt of none but evil doers only to wiſh there was no God. The worſt of men admire virtue in others, and abominate their vices, although they cannot enter into the practice of virtue, nor abhorrence of vice in themſelves; yet this diſeaſe of their men-

tal powers, proves the truth of a Scripture doctrine whether they will or not, namely, Original ſin. And if they cannot help beholding the lovelineſs and excellency of virtue, and an uglineſs and deformity in vice; and even in ſome good fits, could wiſh they were virtuous, and their vices not predominant, wherein could they find their true gain, to deſtroy the great Author and Rewarder of virtue; and the great enemy to, and puniſher of vice.—But the light of Nature within, the works of Nature without, and tokens of divinity in the Scriptures before us, bear ſuch abundant teſtimony to a reaſonable enquirer, as might ſufficiently convince all men, That He is, and that He will be the Rewarder of all them that diligently ſeek Him. How abſurd, then, to admit virtue, ſo lovely fair, and allow her neither portion nor reward.—To acknowledge the uglineſs and criminality of vice, but to admit of no puniſhment, and, at the ſame time, by this rotten and ill-made-ready ſyſtem, doeth as much as in them lieth to unhinge all government, and good order in ſociety. For where is the bands that will bind to a ſuitable attention to duty (in the preſent

lapſed

lapſed and depraved ſtate of human nature) if not the belief of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments; which conſideration alone is ſufficiently powerful to diſpoſe men to act with integrity and juſtice in life. Admitted we then the belief of a God, and it is beyond all diſpute that the Scriptures are his word, and the alone and only rule of faith and manners given to us, it is inconſiſtent with the belief of a God, to believe him any other than a Being of infinite perfection and excellency; and if infinite in every perfection, then certainly ſo in wiſdom; but thoſe who admit his Being, but denies the divinity of the Scriptures, does in fact charge God with folly. For what greater folly than to create ſuch a world as this, and diſplay ſuch infinite wiſdom, power, and goodneſs in furniſhing the ſame, and create ſuch numberleſs millions of rational creatures, endowed with reaſon, and capable of government, and yet take no account of their doings. The very relating ſuch a befotted belief carries along with it its own confutation. For we can ſee ſuch evident teſtimony of the divinity of the Scriptures from the divine Majeſty's dealings with perſons and nations in

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all ages, according to the tenor of his Will therein revealed; in ways, both of judgement and mercy, and according to the tenor of their conduct in life, as may abundantly ſatisfy all men touching their divine authority. It follows then, that the Scriptures being the only rule of faith and manners given unto men, all men poſſeſſed of ſuch an invaluable treaſure, ought to make them their ſole and only counſellors, and the guide of their lives. Theſe only contain the true maxims of unerring wiſdom, the beſt foundation of all law, and the never failing ſtandard of true government. Theſe only are worthy to be the model of our ſentiments, the rule of our converſations, the model of our tempers, and the guide of our whole lives. Your Lordſhip will not readily object to the talents of Joſhua and David, either as warriors, or ſtateſmen and politicians, nor deny their abilities either for the cabinet or field. From whence, or by what means, were they ſo richly furniſhed for ſuch important offices and ſtations. Let us examine the oracles of truth. Joſhua, chap. I. "And the Lord "ſpake unto Joſhua, (Moſes Miniſter,) "ſaying, As I was with Moſes, ſo will

" I be with thee. I will not fail thee " nor forſake thee: Only be thou ſtrong " and very courageous, that thou mayeſt " obſerve to do according to all the law " that Moſes, my ſervant, commanded " thee: Turn not from it to the right " hand nor to the left, that thou mayeſt " proſper witherſoever thou goeſt. This " Book of the law ſhall not depart out " of thy mouth, but thou ſhalt meditate " in it day and night, that thou mayeſt " obſerve to do according to all that is " written therein; for then thou ſhalt " make thy way proſperous, and then " thou ſhalt have good ſucceſs. Have " not I commanded thee, be ſtrong, and " of good courage. Be not afraid, nei- " ther be thou diſmayed, for the Lord " thy God is with thee whitherſoever " thou goeſt." Pſal. cxix. ver. 98, 99, 100. " Thou through thy commandments " has made me wiſer than mine enemies, " for they are ever with me. I have " more underſtanding than all my teach- " ers, for thy Teſtimonies are my medita- " tion. I underſtand more than the an- " cients, becauſe I keep thy precepts." Ver. 23, 24. " Princes alſo did ſit and " ſpeak againſt me, but thy ſervant did

" meditate

" meditate in thy ſtatutes. Thy teſti-
" monies alſo are my delight, and my
" counſellors." (Ver. 111.) " Thy teſti-
" monies have I taken as an heritage for
" ever, for they are the rejoicings of my
" heart."

A more effectual Method for the ſuppreſſing of Vice and Immorality, and for the Encouragement of Religion and Virtue; or, the ſureſt Way to ſecure a laſting Peace, and National Proſperity.

Levit. xxvi. 3. " IF you walk in my
" ſtatutes, and keep
" my commandments, and do them;—
" (ver. 4.) Then I will give you rain in
" due ſeaſon, and the land ſhall yield her
" encreaſe.—(Ver. 6.) And I will give
" peace in the land, and ye ſhall ly
" down, and none ſhall make you afraid.
" —(Ver. 7.) And ye ſhall chace your
" enemies, and they ſhall fall before you
" by the ſword.—(Ver. 12.) And I will
" be your God, and ye ſhall be my people.
" (Ver. 23, 24, 25.) And if ye will not
" be reformed by me by theſe things, but
" will walk contrary to me, then will I
" alſo walk contrary to you; and will pu-
" niſh

" niſh you yet ſeven times for your ſins.
" And I will bring a ſword upon you, that
" ſhall avenge the quarrel of my covenant.
" And when you are gathered together
" within your cities, I will ſend the peſti-
" lence among you; and ye ſhall be de-
" livered into the hand of the enemy."
" —(Jonah 3. 5.) So the people of Nine-
" veh believed God, and proclaimed a
" faſt, and put on ſackcloth from the
" greateſt of them, even unto the leaſt of
" them.—(Ver. 6.) For word came unto
" the king of Nineveh, and he aroſe from
" his throne, and he laid his robe from
" him, and covered him with ſackcloth,
" and ſat in aſhes.—(Ver. 7.) And he
" cauſed it to be publiſhed and proclaim-
" ed through Nineveh, (by the decree of
" the king and his nobles) Saying, let
" neither man nor beaſt, herd nor flock,
" taſte any thing; let them not feed nor
" drink water.—(Ver. 8.) But let man
" and beaſt be covered with ſackcloth,
" and cry mightily unto God; yea, let
" them turn every one from his evil
" way, and from the violence that is in
" their hands.—(Ver. 9.) Who can tell
" if God will turn and repent, and turn
" away from his fierce anger, that we
" periſh

" periſh not.—(Ver. 10.) And God ſaw " their works, that they turned from " their evil way; and God repented of " the evil he ſaid he would do to them, " and he did it not."

Nob. Whether are you going to lecture or to preach?

Farm. I am going to do neither, my Lord. The Scripture ſays, " Whatſo- " ever was written afore time, was writ- " ten for our learning." And in conformity to this high and important intimation from heaven, I am going to make a few obſervations on theſe paſſages above recited, which may not be altogether unprofitable, and which I eſteem to be the duty of all men, without running the hazard of an encroachment upon the prieſt's office; after which I mean to entertain your Lordſhip with what, I hope, will not be unacceptable, namely, A large quotation from the celebrated Dr Swift, wrote in the reign of Queen Anne; and altho' more peculiarly adapted to that reign, may afford matter not altogether uninſtructive to the preſent age; and which I find ſo entirely agreeable to my own ſentiments, that I am conſtrained to adopt it in preference to any thing elſe of the kind

kind I have hitherto examined into or ſeen.

The above quotations from Scripture I have purpoſely drawn into view, to hold up as a glaſs, in which may be read the fate of great Britain, according to the tenor of her preſent and future conduct in life. If we are willing to be reformed, and duly to regard the divine ſtatutes and commandments, and to make the whole of his laws the conſtant rule of our conduct in life, then are we promiſed favourable ſeaſons, that the earth may yield a ſuitable increaſe, and that there may be abundance for man and beaſt. We are alſo promiſed the ineſtimable bleſſings of peace, and that we ſhall ly down in ſafety, and none ſhall make us afraid; and if at any time we are unjuſtly invaded by our enemies, they ſhall be given into our hands, ſhall fall before us by the ſword, and ſhall be driven before our armies as chaff before the wind. But if in defect of duty, and hating to be reformed, we ſhall ſtill perſiſt in our impious courſes, trample on his laws, and walk contrary to him, then will he alſo walk contrary to us, will puniſh us ſeven times more for our ſins than he hath hitherto done, will

giving a ſword upon us to avenge the quarrel of his covenant, and in perfect contempt of the ſtrength of our allies, the number of our armies, and ſtrength of our fleets; and all theſe ſeconded by, and conducted under the fineſt and moſt accompliſhed ſchemes of human policy and wiſdom; yet, we ſhall come down more mightily than ever we did ariſe; and what of our overthrow is unfiniſhed by the ſword, famine and peſtilence ſhall accompliſh the reſt. If we will not believe theſe momentuous truths with application to our own caſe, let us read them in the fatal experience of the moſt mighty empires in paſt ages. If numerous armies, brazen gates, impregnable walls, had been unqueſtionable ſecurity to the impious Belſhazzer, needed he to be under any alarm for the army of Cyrus; yet never was his deſtruction ſo near as in that very period he was rejoicing in his unqueſtioned ſecurity. If Darius muſt come ſhort both of victory and ſafety too, tho' defended by the victorious and invincible arms of 1100,000 Perſians, and this terrible defeat and deſtructive overthrow received from none other than a handful of Macedonians, (though led by Philip's warlike

like ſon) upon what degree of hu life, power may we depend hereafter for ſucceſs? O Britannia! (ſtill bleeding in thy late wounds, received from the hands of thine own children) wilt thou again adventure into the field, before thou reneweſt thy friendſhip with thine ancient Almighty Ally. Did he not write vanity and vexation, ſhame and diſgrace, deſolation and loſs upon thy laſt labours in the bloody field? O Britannia! Were thy princely ſons but duly attentive to the weight of Omnipotence, in the balance of power. But how is the gold become dim? How is the moſt fine gold changed? Thy princely ſons, once ſo famous for their generous and patriotic ſpirits, would they duly attend to theſe two grand and fundamental points, to remove every oppreſſive weight at preſent in their power, and, with equal ardour, preſs an impartial, univerſal, and thorough reformation upon the diſſolute lives of thy degenerated ſons, and endeavour to reſtore that ancient piety, which once did render thee the glory of all lands. How ſoon would He recover to thee the ſullied luſtre of thy once victorious arms, make thy victories as certain as the combat, and

give thee to trample the power, policy, and arms of all thine enemies under thy feet. O Britain! Has not the wakeful eyes of thy moſt Gracious Sovereign been particularly attentive to theſe important matters? How richly deſcribed in the late Royal Proclamation for the ſuppreſſion of vice, and encouragement of religion and virtue. Wilt thou be outdone by heathen Nineveh? How attentive were they to the Royal Mandate of their earthly Sovereign? Did they not cry mightily to God? Did they not turn every one from the evil of his ways, and from the violence that was in their hands? And did not that adorable and benignant Majeſty repent of the evil He ſaid he would do unto them, and He did it not?

From the Works of the celebrated Dean Swift, written about the beginning of the preſent century.

"AMONG all the ſchemes offered to the public in this projecting age, I have obſerved, with much concern, that there have never been any for the improvement of religion and morals, which, beſides the piety of the deſign, from the conſequences of

of ſuch a reformation in a future life, would be the beſt natural means for advancing the public felicity of the ſtate, as well as the preſent happineſs of every individual. For as much as faith and morality are declined among us, I am altogether confident they might, in a ſhort time, and with no very great trouble, be raiſed to as high a perfection as numbers are capable of receiving. Indeed the method is ſo eaſy and obvious, and ſome preſent opportunities ſo good, that, in order to have this project reduced to practice, there ſeems to want nothing more than to put thoſe in mind, who, by their honour, duty, and intereſt, are chiefly concerned. But, becauſe it is idle to propoſe remedies before we are aſſured of the diſeaſe, or to be in fear till we are convinced of the danger, I ſhall firſt ſhow in general, That the nation is extremely corrupted in religion and morals; and then I will offer a ſhort ſcheme for the reformation of both. As to the firſt, I know it is reckoned but a form of ſpeech, when divines complain of the wickedneſs of the age; however, I believe, upon a fair compariſon with other times and countries, it will be found an undoubted truth: For,

firſt, to deliver nothing but plain matter of fact, without exaggeration or ſatire, I ſuppoſe it will be granted, that many of our people of quality and gentry hardly appear to act by any principle of religion, that too many of them do almoſt diſcard it, and are ready to own their diſbelief of all revelation, in ordinary diſcourſe; nor is the caſe any better among the vulgar, eſpecially in great towns, where their prophaneneſs and ignorance are to a degree hard to be imagined greater.

Then it is obſerved abroad, that no race of mortals hath ſo little ſenſe of religion as the Engliſh ſoldiers. To comfirm which, I have been often told by great officers of the army, that in the whole compaſs of their acquaintance, they could not recollect three of their profeſſion who ſeemed to regard or believe one ſyllable of the Goſpel; and the ſame at leaſt may be affirmed of the fleet. The conſequences of all which upon the actions of men are equally manifeſt, if we ſtep into other ſcenes, and conſider the fraud and cozenage of trading men, and ſhop-keepers; that inſatiable gulf of oppreſſion and injuſtice, the law, the open traffic for all civil and military employments, (I wiſh

it

it reſted there) without the leaſt regard to merit or qualifications, the corrupt management of men in office; the many deteſtable abuſes in chooſing thoſe who repreſent the people with the management of intereſts and factions. Among the repreſentatives, to which I muſt be bold to add, the ignorance of ſome of the lower clergy, and the mean and ſervile temper of others.

" This is a ſhort view of the general depravity among us, without entering into particulars, which would be an endleſs labour. Now as univerſal and deep rooted as theſe ſeem to be, I am utterly deceived, if an effectual remedy might not be applied to moſt of them; neither am I at preſent upon a wild, ſpeculative project, but ſuch a one as may be eaſily put in execution. For while the prerogative of giving all employments continues in the Crown, either immediately, or by ſubordination, it is in the power of the Prince to make piety and virtue become the faſhion of the age, if, at the ſame time, he would make them neceſſary qualifications for favour and preferment.

" It is clear from preſent experience, that the bare example of the beſt Prince will

will not have any mighty influence where the age is very corrupt: For when was there ever a better Prince on the throne than the preſent Queen. I do not talk of her talent for Government, her love of the people, or any other qualities that are purely regal, but her piety, charity, temperance, conjugal love, and whatever other virtues do moſt adorn a private life, wherein, without queſtion or flattery, ſhe hath no ſuperior. Yet neither will it be ſatire, nor peeviſh invective, to affirm, that infidelity and vice are not much diminiſhed ſince her coming to the Crown, nor will, in probability, till more effectual remedies are provided. Thus human nature ſeems to ly under this diſadvantage, that the example alone of a vicious Prince will in time corrupt an age, but the example alone of a good one, will not be ſufficient to reform it without further endeavours. Princes muſt therefore ſupply this defect by a vigorous exerciſe of that authority which the law hath left them. By making it every man's intereſt and honour to cultivate religion and virtue, by rendering vice a diſgrace, and the certain ruin to preferment, or pretenſions. All which they ſhould firſt attempt in their

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own Courts and families. For example, might not the Queen's domeſtics of the middle and lower ſort, be obliged, upon penalty of ſuſpenſion, or loſs of their employment, to a conſtant weekly attendance on the ſervice of the Church, and to a decent behaviour in it; to receive the Sacrament; to avoid ſwearing, and irreligious profane diſcourſes, and to the appearance, at leaſt, of temperance and chaſtity? Might not the care of all this be committed to the ſtrict inſpection of proper officers? Might not thoſe of higher rank, and nearer acceſs to her Majeſty, receive her own commands to the ſame purpoſe, and be countenanced, or diſfavoured, according as they obey? Might not the Queen lay her injunctions on the Biſhops, and other great men of undoubted piety, to make diligent inquiry, and give her notice, if any perſon about her ſhould happen to be of libertine principles, or morals? Might not all thoſe who enter upon any office, in her Majeſty's ſervice, be obliged to take an oath parallel with that againſt Simony, which is adminiſtered to the Clergy? It is not to be doubted, but that if thoſe, or the like proceedings, were duly obſerved, morality and religion would

would ſoon become faſhionable Court virtues, and be taken up as the only methods to get or keep employments there, which alone would have mighty influence upon many of the Nobility and principal Gentry. But if the like methods were purſued as far as poſſible with regard to thoſe who are in the great employments of State, it is hard to conceive how general a reformation they might in time produce among us. For if piety and virtue were once reckoned qualifications neceſſary to preferment, every man thus endowed, when put into great ſtations, would readily imitate the Queen's example in the diſtribution of all offices in his diſpoſal, eſpecially if any apparent tranſgreſſion, through favour or partiality, would be imputed to him for a miſdemeanor, by which he muſt certainly forfeit his favour and ſtation; and their being ſuch great numbers in employment, ſcattered through every town and county in this kingdom, if all theſe were examplary in the conduct of their lives, things would ſoon take a new face, and religion receive a mighty encouragement. Nor would the public welfare be be leſs advanced, ſince, of nine offices in ten that are ill executed, the de-

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fect is not in capacity or underſtanding, but in common honeſty. I know no employment for which religion diſqualifies any man; and, if it did, I doubt the objection would not be very ſeaſonably offered at preſent, becauſe it is perhaps too juſt a reflection, that, in the diſpoſal of places, the queſtion, Whether a perſon be fit for what he is recommended to, is generally the laſt thing that is thought upon, or regarded?

" I have often imagined that ſomething parallel to the office of cenſors, anciently in Rome, would be of mighty uſe among us, and could be eaſily limited from running into any exorbitancies. The Romans underſtood liberty as well as we, and were as jealous of it, and upon every occaſion as bold aſſertors; yet I do not remember to have read any great complaints of the abuſes in that office, among them, but many admirable effects of it are left upon record. There are ſeveral pernicious vices frequent and notorious among us; that eſcape or elude the puniſhment of any law at all againſt them: Such as atheiſm, drunkenneſs, fraud, avarice, and ſeveral others, which, by this inſtitution, wiſely regulated, might be much reformed.

ed. Suppoſe, for example, itinerary commiſſioners were appointed to inſpect every where throughout the kingdom, into the conduct (at leaſt) of men in office, with reſpect to their morals and religion, as well as their abilities, to receive the complaints and informations that ſhould be offered againſt them, and make their report here upon oath to the Court, or to the Miniſtry, who ſhould reward or puniſh accordingly. I avoid entering into the particulars of this, or any other ſcheme, which, coming from a private hand, might be liable to many defects, but would ſoon be digeſted by the wiſdom of the nation, and ſurely L. 6000 a-year would not be ill laid out among as many Commiſſioners, duly qualified, who, in three diviſions, ſhould be perſonally obliged to take their yearly circuit for that purpoſe. But this is beſide my preſent deſign, which was only to ſhew what degree of reformation is in the power of the Queen, without the interpoſition of the Legiſlature, and which her Majeſty is, without queſtion, obliged in conſcience to endeavour by her authority, as much as ſhe doth by her practice.

It will be eaſily granted, that the example

ample of this great city hath a mighty influence over the whole kingdom; and it is as manifeſt, that the city is equally influenced by the Court and the Miniſtry, and thoſe who, by their employments, or their hopes, depend upon them. Now, if under ſo excellent a Princeſs as the preſent Queen, we would ſuppoſe a family ſtrictly regulated as I have above propoſed, a Miniſtry, where every ſingle perſon was of diſtinguiſhed piety;—if we ſhould ſuppoſe all great offices of State and law filled after the ſame manner, and with ſuch as were equally diligent in chuſing perſons, who, in their ſeveral ſubordinations, would be obliged to follow the example of their ſuperiors, under the penalty of loſs of favour and place; will not every body grant, that the empire of vice and irreligion would ſoon be deſtroyed within this metropolis, and receive a terrible blow through the whole iſland, which hath ſo great an intercourſe with it, and ſo much affects to follow its faſhions. For if religion were once underſtood to be the neceſſary ſtep to favour and preferment, can it be imagined that any would openly offend againſt it, who had the leaſt regard for his reputation? There is no quality

ſo contrary to any nature which men cannot affect and put on upon occaſion, in order to ſerve an intereſt, or gratify a prevailing paſſion. The proudeſt man will perſonate humility, the moroſeſt learn to flatter; the lazieſt will be ſedelous and active, where he is in purſuit of what he hath much at heart; How ready therefore would moſt men be, to ſtep into the paths of virtue and piety, if they infallibly lead to favour and preferment? If ſwearing and profaneneſs, ſcandalous and avowed lewdneſs, exceſſive gaming and intemperance, were a little diſcountenanced in the army, I cannot readily ſee what ill conſequence could be apprehended. If gentlemen of that profeſſion were at leaſt obliged to ſome external decorum in their conduct, or even if a profligate life and character were not a means of advancement, and the appearance of piety a moſt infallible hinderance, it is impoſſible the corruptions there ſhould be ſo univerſal and exorbitant. I have been aſſured by ſeveral officers, that no troops abroad are ſo ill diſciplined as the Engliſh, which cannot well be otherwiſe, while the common ſoldiers have perpetually before their eyes the vicious example of their leaders;

and

and it is hardly poſſible for thoſe to commit any crime whereof theſe are not infinitely more guilty, and with far leſs temptation.

" It is commonly charged upon the gentlemen of the army, that the beaſtly vice of drinking to exceſs hath been lately, from their example, reſtored among us, which, for ſome years before, was almoſt dropt in England; but whoever the introducers were, they have ſucceeded to a miracle, many of the young Nobility and Gentry are already become great proficients, and are under no manner of concern to hide their talent, but are got beyond all ſenſe of ſhame, or fear of reproach. This might ſoon be remedied, if the Queen would think fit to declare, that no young perſons of quality whatſoever, who was notoriouſly given to that, or any other vice, ſhould be capable of her favour, or even admitted into her preſence; with poſitive command to her Miniſters, and others in great office, to treat them in the ſame manner; after which, all men who had any regard for their reputation, or any proſpect of preferment, would avoid their commerce. This would quickly make that vice ſo

ſcandalous, that thoſe who could no ſubdue, would at leaſt endeavour to diſguiſe it.

" The reformation of the Stage alſo is in the power of the Queen, and in the conſequences it has upon the minds of the people, doth very well deſerve her ſtricteſt care, beſides the indecent and prophane paſſages. Beſides the perpetual turning into ridicule the very function of the prieſthood, with other irregularities in moſt modern comedies, which have been often objected to, it is worth obſerving, the diſtributive juſtice of the authors, which is conſtantly applied to the puniſhment of virtue, and the reward of vice; directly oppoſite to the rules of their beſt critics, as well as to the practice of dramatic Poets in all ages and countries. For example, a country ſquire who is repreſented with no other vice but that of being a clown, and having the provincial accent upon his tongue, which is neither a fault, nor in his power to remedy, muſt be condemned to marry a caſt wench, or a cracked chamber-maid. On the other hand, a rake-hell of the town, whoſe character is ſet off with no other accompliſhment, but exceſſive prodigality, prophaneneſs and intemperance,

temperance, and luſt, is rewarded with a lady of great fortune to repair his own, which his vices had almoſt ruined. And as in a tragedy, the hero is repreſented to have obtained many victories, in order to raiſe his character in the minds of the ſpectators, ſo the hero of a comedy is repreſented to have been victorious in all his intrigues for the ſame reaſon. I do not remember that our Engliſh poets ever ſuffered a criminal amour to ſucceed upon the Stage till the reign of Charles II. Ever ſince that time, the alderman is made a cuckold, the deluded virgin is debauched, and adultery and fornication are ſuppoſed to be committed behind the ſcenes. As part of the action, theſe, and many more corruptions of the Theatre, peculiar to our age and nation, need continue no longer than while the Court is content to connive at, or neglect them. Surely a penſion would not be ill employed on ſome men of wit, learning, and virtue, who might have power to ſtrike out every offenſive and unbecoming paſſage from plays already written, as well as thoſe that may be offered to the Stage for the future; by which, and other wiſe regulations, the Theatre might become a very innocent

and uſeful diverſion, inſtead of being a ſcandal and reproach to our religion and country.

" The propoſals I have hitherto made for the advancement of religion and morality are ſuch as come within the reach of adminiſtration, ſuch as a pious, active prince, with a ſteady reſolution, might ſoon bring to effect. Neither am I aware of any objections to be raiſed againſt what I have advanced, unleſs it ſhould be thought, that making religion a neceſſary ſtep to intereſt and favour, might increaſe hypocriſy among us, and I readily believe it would; but if one in twenty ſhould be brought over to true piety by this or the like methods, and the other nineteen be only hypocrites, the advantage would ſtill be great. Beſides, hypocriſy is much more eligible than open infidelity and vice. It wears the livery of religion; it acknowledgeth her authority,—is cautious of giving ſcandal: Nay, a long continued diſguiſe is too great a conſtraint upon human nature, eſpecially upon Engliſh diſpoſitions. Men would leave off their vices out of mere wearineſs rather than undergo the toil and hazard, and, perhaps, the expence of practiſing them in private; and

I believe

I believe it is often with religion as with love, which, by much diſſembling, becomes real.

" All other projects to this great end have proved hitherto ineffectual; laws againſt immorality have not been executed, and proclamations, occaſionally iſſued out to inforce them, are wholly unregarded as things of form. But that ſome effectual attempt ſhould be made toward ſuch a reformation is, perhaps, more neceſſary than people commonly apprehend; becauſe the ruin of a State is often preceded by an univerſal degeneracy of manners, and contempt of religion, which is intirely our caſe at preſent.

" Neither is this a matter to be deferred till a more convenient time of peace and leiſure. A reformation in mens faith and morals is the beſt natural, as well as religious means, either to bring war to a good concluſion, or even to preſerve the bleſſings of peace; becauſe, if men in truſt performed their duty for conſcience ſake, affairs would not ſuffer through fraud, falſehood, and neglect, as they now perpetually do; and if they believed a God and his providence, and acted accordingly, they might reaſonably hope for his

his divine aſſiſtance in ſo juſt a cauſe as ours.

" Nor could the majeſty of the Engliſh Crown appear, upon any occaſion, in a greater luſtre, either to foreigners or ſubjects, than by an adminiſtration, which, producing ſuch great effects, would diſcover ſo much power; and power being the natural appetite of princes, a limited monarch cannot ſo well gratify it in any thing as a ſtrict execution of the laws.

" The many corruptions at preſent in every branch of buſineſs are almoſt inconceivable; but what remedy can be found in a conſtitution like ours for ſuch grievances, but to bring religion into countenance, and encourage thoſe, who, from the hope of future reward, and dread of future puniſhment, will be moved to act with juſtice and integrity.

" This is not to be accompliſhed any other way than by introducing religion as much as poſſible to be the turn and faſhion of the age, which only lies in the power of adminiſtration; the Prince, with the utmoſt ſtrictneſs regulating the Court, the Miniſtry, and other perſons in great employment; and theſe, by their example and authority, reforming all who

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have dependance on them. It is certain, that a reformation ſucceſsfully carried on in this great city would, in time, ſpread itſelf over the whole kingdom. Since moſt of the conſiderable youth paſs here that ſeaſon of their lives wherein the ſtrongeſt impreſſions are made, in order to improve education, or advance their fortune; and thoſe among them who return into their ſeveral countries, are ſure to be followed and imitated as the general pattern of wit and good breeding.

" And if things were once in this train, that is, if virtue and religion were eſtabliſhed as the neceſſary titles to reputation and preferment, and if vice and infidelity were not only loaden with infamy, but made the infallible ruin of all mens' pretenſions, our duty, by becoming our intereſt, would take root in our natures, and mix with the very genius of our people, ſo that it would not be eaſy for the example of one wicked Prince, to bring us back to our former corruptions.

" I have confined myſelf (as it is before obſerved) to theſe methods, for the advancement of piety, which are in the power of a Prince, limited like ours, by a ſtrict execution of the laws in force; and this

this is enough for a project that comes without any name or recommendation, I doubt a great deal more than will be ſuddenly reduced into practice, though, if any diſpoſition ſhould appear toward ſo good a work, it is certain, that the aſſiſtance of the legiſlative power would be neceſſary to make it more compleat. But to leave theſe airy imaginations of introducing new laws for the amendment of mankind, what I principally inſiſt on is a due execution of the old, which ly wholly in the Crown, and in the authority derived from thence; I return, therefore, to my former aſſertion, That if ſtations of power, truſt, profit and honour, were conſtantly made rewards of virtue and piety, ſuch an adminiſtration muſt needs have a mighty influence on the morals of the whole kingdom; and men of great abilities would then endeavour to excel in the duties of a religious life, in order to qualify themſelves for public ſervice. I may poſſibly be wrong in ſome of the means I preſcribe towards this end, but that is no material objection againſt the deſign itſelf. Let thoſe who are at the helm contrive it better, which perhaps they may eaſily do. Every body will agree, that the diſeaſe is manifeſt,

manifeſt, as well as dangerous, that ſome remedy is neceſſary; and that none yet applied hath been effectual, which is a ſufficient excuſe for any man who wiſhes well to his country, to offer his thoughts, when he can have no other end but the public good. The preſent Queen is a Princeſs of as many and great virtues as ever filled a Throne: How would it brighten her character in the preſent and after ages, if ſhe would exert her utmoſt authority to inſtil ſome of thoſe virtues into her people, which they are too degenerate to learn only from her example. And be it ſpoken with all the veneration poſſible for ſo excellent a Sovereign, her beſt endeavours in this weighty affair is a moſt important part of her duty, as well as of her intereſt, and her honour.

" Fidelity to a preſent eſtabliſhment is indeed the principal means to defend it from a foreign enemy; but without other qualifications will not prevent corruptions from within; and ſtates are more often ruined by theſe than the other. To conclude, whether the propoſals I have offered toward a reformation, be ſuch as are moſt prudent and convenient, may probably be a queſtion; but it is none at all,

Whether

Whether ſome reformation be abſolutely neceſſary? becauſe the nature of things is ſuch, that if abuſes is not remedied, they will certainly increaſe, nor never ſtop till they end in the ſubverſion and ruin of the commonwealth. As there will always of neceſſity be ſome corruptions, ſo, in a well inſtituted ſtate, the executive power will be always contending againſt them, by reducing things (as Machiavel ſpeaks) to their firſt principles. Never letting abuſes grow inveterate, or multiply ſo far that it will be hard to find remedies, and perhaps impoſſible to apply them; as he that would keep his houſe in repair, muſt attend every little breach or flaw, and ſupply it immediately, elſe time alone will bring all to ruin, How much more the common accidents of ſtorm and rain? He muſt live in perpetual danger of his houſe falling about his ears, and will find it cheaper to throw it quite down, and build it entirely from the ground, perhaps upon a new foundation, or, at leaſt, in a new form, which may neither be ſo ſafe nor convenient as the old."

My Lord, there are three doctrines here taught by Dr. Swift, very obſervable, and which,

which, as already ſaid, although wrote about the beginning of this century, and peculiarly adapted to that age, may afford matter not altogether unſuitable to the preſent times; and therefore, ſo far as they will apply, we will endeavour to make application of them for our own uſe and benefit.

The firſt is, That we, as a nation, are extremely corrupted in our religion and morals.

Secondly, That no remedy hitherto applied hath been effectual.

Thirdly, That, according to the ſentiments of Dr Swift, the open traffic in that age for all civil and military employments, without regard to merit or qualifications, was the alone ſource of all that corruption, depravity, and degeneracy of manners, into which the nation was then ſunk.

Laſtly, The Doctor propoſes a remedy, which conſiſts in this, That, as the prerogative of giving all employments continues in the Crown, either immediately or by ſubordination, it is in the power of the Prince (ſays he) to make piety and virtue become the faſhion of the age, if, at the ſame time, he would make them neceſſary qualifications for favour and pre-

ferment. This he judged expedient, becauſe it was clear from the experience of that age, (and it is equally clear from the experience of the preſent,) that the bare example of the beſt of princes will not have any powerful influence, where the age is very corrupt. Therefore, (ſays he) princes once finding all other remedies ineffectual, may ſupply this defect by a vigorous exerciſe of that authority which the law has left them, by making it every man's intereſt and honour to cultivate religion and virtue, by rendering vice a diſgrace, and the certain ruin to preferment or pretenſions. All which (ſays the Doctor) they will firſt attempt in their own courts and families.

But there is no ſentiment of the Doctor's I do ſo much admire as his deſire to ſee itinerary commiſſioners appointed to inſpect every where throughout the kingdom, into the conduct (at leaſt) of men in office, with reſpect to their morals and religion, as well as their abilities,—to receive the complaints and informations that ſhould be offered againſt them, and make their report upon oath, to the Court, or to the Miniſtry, who ſhould reward or puniſh accordingly.

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My Lord, what admirable effects might not ſuch a noble inſtitution as this produce. Such an inſtitution I ſhould not only eſteem a token for good, but the moſt certain forerunner of our thorough reformation, and complete recovery from all our miſery. Some ſuch reformation as this, no doubt, was adopted by heathen Nineveh, which we could only conſider as little more than purely external; yet ſuch was the benignity of their gracious Creator, that their city was ſaved by their external reformation. Did the dim light of nature teach them how to appeaſe their incenſed Creator, and ſhall they not riſe up againſt us and condemn us, if we, under the brighteſt ſunſhine of divine revelation, ſhall, notwithſtanding, come ſhort of them.

But the Doctor proceeds. Surely (ſays he) L. 6000 a-year would not be ill laid out among as many commiſſioners, duly qualified, who, in three diviſions, ſhould be perſonally obliged to take their yearly circuit for that purpoſe.

Duly qualified.— My Lord, How important is the meaning of theſe words, was the meaſure adopted; yet the fate of the whole nation depends upon the wiſdom of the choice. Were no more regard

paid to the qualifications of the perſons choſen into this commiſſion, than to the qualities of the perſons choſen into many other offices, their miniſtration could be of no real uſe to the nation. Were they corrupt, or capable of being corrupted, the whole nation might ſink under the increaſing degeneracy of its manners. Were they duly qualified, what happy effects might it not produce. But what are the needful qualifications of theſe? Surely the ſame as in all other magiſtrates. But we will conſult Moſes father in-law. If the noble Generaliſſimo of the Jewiſh army diſdained not his counſel, although under the divine inſpiration himſelf, much leſs ſhould we. Let us attend then to this venerable Midianite, Exod. xviii. 21.— "Moreover thou ſhalt provide out of all "the people, able men, ſuch as fear "God, men of truth, hating covetouſ-"neſs, and place ſuch over them.—Thou "ſhall provide out of all the people."— No partial reſtrictions to particular places, or perſons, no, not to friends, to provide them with fortunes, or inveſt them with offices they are unfit to poſſeſs. But if thou ſhouldeſt ranſack all Iſrael, from Dan

Dan to Berſheba, chuſe none but ſuch as have the ſpirit of their office.

Able men.— This may no doubt imply wealth, and opulent circumſtances, as needful to lift them above contempt, but does undoubtedly refer more chiefly to great abilities of mind, or to the poſſeſſion of all thoſe talents and virtues which are needful to accompliſh the great magiſtrate.

Such as fear God.—My Lord, How needful is this qualification in all ranks of men, but more eſpecially in rulers, judges, magiſtrates, overſeers, *&c.* Who can be truly faithful to King or people, that are void of the fear of God. There was in a city a judge, which feared not God, neither regarded man, (ſays the Word,) the ſame word pronounces him an unjuſt judge.—Why ſo?—He did juſtice to the widow.— Yes, in the concluſion.—Why then is he called unjuſt?— Firſt, becauſe his pride, ſloth, and averſion to juſtice, diſpoſed him to be tedious and dilatory in pronouncing ſentence, to weary her out. But ſhe ſtill perſiſting, with renewed importunity, gave him ſo much trouble, that the duties of his office compelled him to come to a concluſion. His

motives of action may be gathered from his own words.— Though I fear not God, (ſays he) nor regards man, yet, becauſe this widow troubleth me, I will avenge her, leſt, by her continal coming, ſhe weary me.

But is it poſſible, my Lord, for a judge to be juſt without the fear of God? Not in every reſpect ſurely. The word *juſtice*, in its fulleſt latitude and meaning, is more comprehenſive than we are aware. It is the higheſt point of juſtice to give God his due; and, I am afraid, it is in this ſenſe chiefly that the Scripture pronounces him unjuſt. If judges then, my Lord, are duly attentive to a juſt defence of the lives and properties of men, ſtrictly attentive in the diſtribution of juſtice, to render unto all according to the merit or demerit of the cauſe, this is ſo far well; but if he is regardleſs of the honour and dignity of the divine Majeſty, his Name blaſphemed, his Sabbaths prophaned, his worſhip contemned, or neglected; his Word deſpiſed, and made the ſubject of prophane jeſts; if drunkenneſs, adulteries, fornications, if all, or any ſuch external outbreakings, are paſſed over, and unregarded by the civil power, though ſub-

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ject to its controul. Wherein, my Lord, lies the juſtice of ſuch a procedure? Was blaſphemy, adultery, *&c.* puniſhed with death by the Divine law under the Old Teſtament diſpenſation? And have we a toleration to trample on ſuch laws under the Goſpel? Is a trifling part of the goods, or property of men, unjuſtly invaded, puniſhed with death? And when the glorious and fearful Name of God is prophanely trampled under foot, Is this unworthy of notice? I know no external tranſgreſſion againſt either the firſt or ſecond Table of the Law but is juſtly puniſhable by the civil power; and which, if neglected, is a contempt of the Sovereign authority of the Great Lawgiver. But if ſuch enormities, of whatever kind or degree, are committed beyond the reach of human evidence, or ſuch conviction as might lead to puniſhment, ſuch tranſgreſſion can only be conſidered as perſonal, and the offender expoſed to Divine puniſhment in a perſonal capacity only, and the juſtice of the civil magiſtrate cannot be impeached; but if evidence of ſuch a tranſgreſſion can be obtained, and the offender brought to puniſhment, but no account made of his tranſgreſſion, then is

the

the ſin national,— the judges' ſin as well as the offenders; and the honour of God being invaded by the offender, but ſet at nought by the civil magiſtrate, who is the miniſter of God for the puniſhment of evil doers, but bearing the ſword in vain, and falſe to his truſt, the tranſgreſſion, therefore, becomes national, and expoſes the kingdom to national judgements.

Men of truth — A moſt endearing qualification in all men, but eſpecially in rulers, judges, magiſtrates, *&c.* This divine virtue will always diſpoſe the upright judge, the man of truth, to labour to ſee all cauſes in their juſt light, and patiently to wait for, and admit every poſſible evidence needful to clear up the truth, and to ſee through the ſophiſtry and falſe gloſſes of the greateſt orators, when baſely employed to darken and obſcure the truth; witneſs that nonſuch character Job, who breathes the true ſpirit of the renowned magiſtrate, Job xix. "I was a father to "the poor, and the cauſe which I knew "not, I ſearched out." My Lord, I cannot paſs this auguſt and venerable character without taking a fuller view of its author, both in his public capacity and private eſtate. View this great man in the

the latter, he heaps up ſilver as the duſt; he waſhes his ſteps in butter, and the rock pours him out rivers of oil. View him in the former, Princes revere his dignity, and the aged liſten to his wiſdom. Every eye beholds him with delight; every tongue loads him with bleſſings. View him in his domeſtic circumſtances, on one hand he is defended by a troop of ſons, on the other adorned with a train of daughters; and on all ſides ſurrounded by a very great houſehold. chap. xxix. " When I went out to the gate through " the city, when I prepared my ſeat in " the ſtreet, the young men ſaw me and " hid themſelves, and the aged aroſe " and ſtood up: The Princes refrained " talking, and laid their hand upon their " mouth: The Nobles held their peace, " and their tongue cleaved to the roof of " their mouth. When the ear heard me, " than it bleſſed me; and when the eye " ſaw me, than it gave witneſs to me; " becauſe I delivered the poor, that cry- " ed, and the fatherleſs, and him that " had none to help: The bleſſing of him " that was ready to periſh came upon me, " and I cauſed the widows heart to ſing " for joy. I put on righteouſneſs, and

" it

" it cloathed me: My judgement was as
" a robe and diadem. I was eyes to the
" blind, and feet was I to the lame.
" I was a father to the poor, and the
" cauſe which I knew not, I ſearched
" out; and I brake the jaws of the wick-
" ed, and plucked the ſpoil out of his
" teeth. Unto me men gave ear, and
" waited, and kept ſilence: At my coun-
" ſel, after my words, they ſpake not
" again, and they waited for me as for
" the rain; and they opened their mouth
" wide as for the latter rain. I chuſe
" out their way, and ſat chief; and
" dwelt as a king in the army, as one
" that comforteth the mourners."

My Lord, What luſtre and dignity appears in this great man! How is every common badge of modern greatneſs darkened here as ſtars before the ſun? What is even the tedious pomp that waits on princes, of horſes led, and grooms beſmeared with gold, compared with the virtues, the ſplendor, the godlike excellencies of this venerable ancient.

Hating covetouſneſs. Such an illuſtrious judge as this has neither a heart to wiſh, a hand to receive, nor a pocket to hold a bribe.

And

And place ſuch over them.—Indeed, my Lord, to commit this charge to men void of ſuitable qualifications, or even to bear rule in any other line, is committing the ſheep to the care of the wolf, and employing Satan, as miniſter, to pull down the empire of ſin.

By this time, I dare ſay, your Lordſhip will find no difficulty in joining ſentiments with Dr Swift in this, That if ſuch wholeſome meaſures were adopted in the filling up of offices and choice of magiſtrates, together with commiſſioners ſuitably qualified for inſpection of their conduct,—the empire of vice muſt not only be deſtroyed in our metropolis, the fountain-head of power, but alſo receive a terrible blow through the whole iſland, which have ſo great an intercouiſe with it, and ſo much affects to follow its faſhions. For if religion were once underſtood to be the neceſſary ſtep to favour and preferment, could it be imagined that any would openly offend againſt it, who had the leaſt regard for his fortune or reputation. How readily would men ſtep into the paths of piety and virtue if they infallibly led to favour and fortune. All other projects (ſays the Doctor) to this great end have

hitherto

hitherto proved ineffectual. Laws againſt immorality have not been executed, and proclamations occaſionally iſſued out to inforce them, have been wholly unregarded as things of form. But that ſome effectual attempt ſhould be made toward ſuch a reformation, is perhaps more neceſſary than people commonly apprehend; becauſe the ruin of a ſtate is generally preceded by an univerſal degeneracy of manners, and contempt of religion, which is entirely our caſe at this day.

Nob. But would not the two kingdoms be a charge full too much for the ſix commiſſioners propoſed by Dr Swift, for inſpection of the conduct of men in office, which, conſidering the extent of the charge, two only could be allotted for Scotland, and four for England, and many treſpaſſes might eſcape their utmoſt vigilance.

Farm. Indeed, my Lord, had the Doctor ſaid ſixty commiſſioners, in place of ſix, I dare ſay the two kingdoms would find ſufficient work for them all; which, appointing twenty for Scotland, and forty for England,— (dividing Scotland into ten diſtricts, perhaps including three counties into each, and each diſtrict the charge of

of two commiſſioners; and dividing England into twenty diſtricts, each diviſion having the charge of two commiſſioners; and their ſalaries might be leſs, by being freed from a wide and extenſive circuit. L. 200 a-year might do very well, which altogether would amount to L. 12,000, which money, if ſo beſtowed upon zealous and faithful men, would be a far greater charity and ſervice in behalf of the kingdom than an L. 100,000 diſperſed among the poor.

And now my Lord, when almoſt concluding this eſſay, an important occurrence takes place, which gives me much pleaſure, and brings freſh to my remembrance an old objection mentioned by your Lordſhip, namely, That a too cloſe connection eſtabliſhed between this ſyſtem and the intereſts, duties, and precepts of religion, would bring it into diſeſteem, and make it more the ſubject of ſcorn than univerſal regard. While I was pondering whether I could poſſibly make any abridgement of that kind, without injury to the noble cauſe, and even to truth itſelf, forth comes the Royal Proclamation, like an angelic embaſſy from the Court of heaven, containing his Majeſty's moſt gra-

cious and royal purpoſe, of giving every poſſible encouragement to piety and virtue, and ſuppreſſing and puniſhing vice, prophaneneſs, and immorality in all perſons without exception, by which I was abundantly encouraged to hold to my firſt ſentiments, and humbly hope I ſhall be kept from advancing any thing that is not found the echo of the ſaid proclamation, and, in every branch thereof, eaſily reducible to the ſame. The above declaration of the Royal Mind is ſo abundantly expreſſive of the moſt ardent and parental regard to the proſperity and welfare of his people in this life, and happineſs in that which is to come, as muſt create in every generous Briton's heart the warmeſt love, and firmeſt attachment to his Royal Perſon and government. My Lord, What would the primitive Chriſtians have given, in thoſe early and perſecuting ages, to have heard ſuch a declaration from the Thrones of thoſe ages?— to have heard that ſentence from their Princes lips, "We will upon all occaſions diſtinguiſh "perſons of piety and virtue, by marks "of our Royal Favour." But as we can give no deſcription of the ſaid Proclamation that is fit to do juſtice to the ſame,

ſame, we will inſert it at large, as worthy of the moſt diſtinguiſhed place in any plan of reform; and which I would eſteem a moſt ſpecial ſervice done the young and riſing generation, to read the ſaid Proclamation in their hearing at home every Lord's day.

" *By the King, a* PROCLAMATION, *for the*
" *encouragement of Piety and Virtue, and*
" *for preventing and puniſhing of Vice,*
" *Prophaneneſs, and Immorality.*

" GEORGE R.

" WHEREAS, we cannot but obſerve " with inexpreſſible concern, " the rapid progreſs of impiety and licen- " tiouſneſs, and that deluge of prophane- " neſs, immorality, and every kind of " vice, which, to the ſcandal of our holy " religion, and to the evil example of " our loving ſubjects, hath broken in " upon this nation: We therefore eſteem- " ing it our indiſpenſible duty to exert " the authority committed to us for the " ſuppreſſion of theſe ſpreading evils, fear- " ing leſt that they ſhould provoke God's " wrath and indignation againſt us, and " humbly acknowledging that we cannot

" expect

" expect the bleſſing and goodneſs of Al-
" mighty God (by whom Kings reign,
" and on which we entirely rely) to make
" our reign happy and proſperous to our-
" ſelf and our people, without a religious
" obſervance of God's holy laws: To the
" intent that religion, piety and good
" manners, may (according to our moſt
" hearty deſire) flouriſh and encreaſe un-
" der our adminiſtration and govern-
" ment, have thought fit, by the advice
" of our Privy Council, to iſſue this our
" Royal Proclamation, and do hereby de-
" clare our royal purpoſe and reſolution
" to diſcountenance and puniſh all man-
" ner of vice, prophaneneſs, and immora-
" lity, in all perſons of whatſoever de-
" gree or quality, within this our realm,
" and particularly in ſuch as are employed
" near our royal perſon; and that for the
" encouragement of religion and morality,
" we will, upon all occaſions, diſtinguiſh
" perſons of piety and virtue, by marks
" of our royal favour: And we do expect
" and require, That all perſons of honour,
" or in place of authority, will give good
" example by their own piety and virtue,
" and to their utmoſt contribute to the
" diſcountenancing perſons of diſſolute and
" debauched

" debauched lives, that they, being re-
" duced by that means to ſhame and con-
" tempt for their looſe and evil actions
" and behaviour, may be thereby alſo
" enforced the ſooner to reform their ill
" habits and practices, and that the viſible
" diſpleaſure of good men towards them,
" may (as far as it is poſſible) ſupply what
" the laws (probably) cannot altogether
" prevent: And we do hereby ſtrictly en-
" join and prohibit all our loving ſubjects,
" of what degree or quality ſoever, from
" playing, on the Lord's Day, at dice,
" cards, or any other game whatſoever,
" either in public or private houſes, or
" other place or places whatſover: And
" we do hereby require and command
" them, and every of them, decently and
" reverently to attend the worſhip of
" God on the Lord's Day, on pain of
" our higheſt diſpleaſure, and of being
" proceeded againſt with the utmoſt ri-
" gour that may be by law.

" And for the more effectual reform-
" ing all ſuch perſons, who, by reaſon of
" their diſſolute lives and converſation,
" are a ſcandal to our kingdom, our fur-
" ther pleaſure is, and we do hereby
" ſtrictly charge and command all our

" judges, mayors, ſheriffs, juſtices of the
" peace, and all other our officers and
" miniſters, both eccleſiaſtical and civil,
" and all other our ſubjects, to be very
" vigilant and ſtrict, in the diſcovery
" and the effectual proſecution and pu-
" niſhment of all perſons who ſhall be
" guilty of exceſſive drinking, blaſphe-
" my, prophane ſwearing and curſing,
" lewdneſs, profanation of the Lord's
" day, or other diſſolute, immoral, or
" diſorderly practices; and that they take
" care alſo effectually to ſuppreſs all pu-
" blic gaming houſes, and other looſe
" and diſorderly houſes, and alſo all unlicen-
" ced public ſhews, interludes, and places
" of entertainment, uſing the utmoſt
" caution in licencing the ſame: Alſo to
" ſuppreſs all looſe and licentious prints,
" books, and publications, diſperſing poi-
" ſon to the minds of the young and un-
" wary, and to puniſh the publiſhers and
" venders thereof; and to put in execu-
" tion the ſtatute made in the twenty-
" ninth year of the reign of the late
" King Charles II. intitled, An act for the
" better obſervation of the Lord's Day,
" commonly called Sunday, and alſo an
" act of Parliament made in the ninth

" year

" year of the reign of the late King " William III. intitled, An act for the " more effectual ſuppreſſing of blaſphe- " my and prophaneneſs; and alſo an act " paſſed in the twenty-firſt year of our " reign, intitled, An act for preventing " certain abuſes, and profanations on " the Lord's Day, called Sunday; and " all other laws now in force for the pu- " niſhing and ſuppreſſing any of the vices " aforeſaid, and alſo to ſuppreſs and pre- " vent all gaming whatſoever in public " or private houſes on the Lord's Day; " and likewiſe that they take effectual " care to prevent all perſons keeping ta- " verns, chocolate houſes, coffee houſes, " or other public houſes whatſoever, " from ſelling wine, chocolate, coffee, " ale, beer, or other liquors, or receiving " or permitting gueſts to be, or remain " in ſuch their houſes in the time of " Divine Service on the Lord's Day, as " they will anſwer it to Almighty God, " and upon pain of our higheſt diſplea- " ſure.

" And for the more effectual proceed- " ing herein, we do hereby direct and " command all our judges of aſſize, and ju- " ſtices of the peace, to give ſtrict charge

" at

" at their reſpective aſſizes and ſeſſions,
" for the due proſecution and puniſh-
" ment of all perſons that ſhall preſume
" to offend in any of the crimes afore-
" ſaid; and alſo of all perſons that, con-
" trary to their duty, ſhall be remiſs or
" negligent in putting the ſaid laws in
" execution; and that they do, at their
" reſpective aſſizes and quarter ſeſſions of
" the peace, cauſe this our Royal Pro-
" clamation to be publickly read in open
" court immediately before the charge is
" given.

" And we do hereby further charge
" and command every miniſter in his re-
" ſpective pariſh church, or chapel, to
" read, or cauſe to be read, this our Pro-
" clamation, at leaſt four times in every
" year, immediately after Divine Service,
" and to incite, and ſtir up their reſpec-
" tive auditors to the practice of piety
" and virtue, and the avoiding of all im-
" morality and prophaneneſs.

" And to the end that all vice and de-
" bauchery may be prevented, and reli-
" gion and virtue practiſed by all officers,
" private ſoldiers, mariners, and others
" who are employed in our ſervice, by
" ſea or land, we do hereby ſtrictly charge

" and

" and command all our commanders,
" and officers whatſoever, that they do
" take care to avoid all prophaneneſs,
" debauchery, and other immoralities,
" and that by their own good and virtu-
" ous lives and converſation, they do ſet
" good examples to all ſuch as are under
" their care and authority; and likewiſe
" take care of, and inſpect the behaviour
" of all ſuch as are under them, and pu-
" niſh all thoſe who ſhall be guilty of any
" of the offences aforeſaid, as they will
" be anſwerable for the ill conſequences
" of their neglect herein.

" Given at our Court at St. James's,
" the 1ſt day of June, 1787, in the
" 27th year of our reign.

" God Save the King."

All that has been advanced in the diſcourſe preceding the Royal Proclamation, all that ever ſhall in future be offered on that ſubject, together with the ſubſtance of the ſaid Proclamation itſelf, is fully ſummed up, and contained in the following texts.— Jer. xviii. 7, 8, 9, 10. " At
" what inſtant I ſhall ſpeak concerning a
" nation, and concerning a kingdom, to
" pluck up, and to pull down, and to
" deſtroy.

" deſtroy.— If that nation againſt whom
" I have pronounced, turn from their
" evil, I will repent of the evil I thought
" to do unto them. And at what in-
" ſtant I ſhall ſpeak concerning a nation,
" and concerning a kingdom, to build
" and to plant it, if it do evil in my
" ſight, that it obey not my voice, than
" I will repent of the good wherewith
" I ſaid I would benefit them."

If we would give equal credit to the Word of the God of truth, as we would to the word of an honeſt man, what need we any further queſtion, but that He will deal with us expreſsly according to the tenor of this his Word; or according to our future conduct towards Him. And as the whole of his purpoſe to us ward may be gathered from his Word, ſo much of his mind may be learned from the diſpenſations of his Providence towards us. If then adverſe diſpenſations are appointed, ſuch as the ſword, bad ſeaſons, famine, epidemical diſtempers, or peſtilence, which his Word aſſures us, are the three ſore ſcourges he makes uſe of, to puniſh a guilty nation,— if, I ſay, we are exerciſed with either of theſe, it is a ſure token of the Divine diſpleaſure on account

of

of ſin; but favourable diſpenſations are not to be admitted as proofs, that he is well pleaſed with us, or that he has no ground of controverſy. To learn the true language of ſuch favourable diſpenſations, we muſt go to his Word, and from it learn, that, if under theſe external favours we are ſtill perſiſting in our impenitent courſes, ſuch favours are only ſome notification of his goodneſs ſent for a time, in order to ſee whether his goodneſs will lead us to repentance; and therefore ſuch favours for a time continued, are only the effects of his darling attribute, to wit, Divine mercy, ſtruggling with Divine juſtice; and that moving and pathetic words is the genuine language of ſuch favoured diſpenſations. How ſhall I give thee up, O England! How ſhall I deliver thee Scotland! How ſhall I make thee as Admah? How ſet thee as Zeboim. Mine heart is turned within me; my repentings are kindled together. I will not execute the fierceneſs of mine anger. I will not return to deſtroy Britain; for I am God, and not man. And if they will humble themſelves, and return to me with their whole heart, I will not enter into the city but as its friend. Such was

the

the language of his favour manifeſted in withdrawing the ſword in the late American war, before our ruin was accompliſhed; yet did he take vengeance on our inventions, while he ſuffered us (the inventors) to eſcape. He manifeſted his high diſpleaſure, to let us ſee the weakneſs of the beſt human councils, and utmoſt ſtretch of human wiſdom, unaſſiſted by divine; by the loſs of thirteen fine provinces, many millions of treaſure, and many thouſand lives. What then, Will the ſons of fair Britannia exclaim againſt the wiſdom of her councils, the conduct of her miniſters, the courage of her commanders, and the bravery of her ſeamen and troops, and arraign the defects of theſe, as the root of all her misfortunes? Remember, my Friends, not the defects of theſe, but your ſins and mine, the joint iniquities of the whole land, is the root of all our misfortunes, whether of a public or private nature. It was then the ſins of Great Britain baffled all her councils, overthrew her armies, ſcattered her treaſures, and rent her territories in pieces; and while we continue in the ſame impenitent courſes, hating to be reformed, we muſt expect no better ſucceſs in any fu-

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ture war. Again, for the ſame gracious purpoſes before recited, to reclaim us from our wickedneſs, and lead us to repentance, he was pleaſed, in the midſt of ſeveral bad years, and defective crops, to ſend us one uncommonly rich, in the year 1784, to keep us from extremity, and ſave us from utter ruin. But what effects has it produced? Are we not ſtill the ſame? Still unreclaimed. Does not the preſent diſpenſations of his Providence ſay ſo? Is he not again filling all his diſpenſations with marks of anger, threatned in the ſeaſons, threatned with the ſword, threatned in ſeveral parts with epidemical diſtempers. If in none of all theſe we will hear the rod, and Him that has appointed it, need we to wonder if the next voice ſhould ſay, Cut her down, why cumbereth ſhe the ground? If then we would wiſh to hear better tidings, and things that accompany our ſafety and proſperity; if to ſee wiſdom ſhining in our councils, conduct in our miniſters, courage in our commanders, and ſtrength in thoſe that turn the battle from our gates; if we would not, by our own incorrigible wickedneſs, impoſe a fatal neceſſity of miſcarriage in our councils, and

overthrow of our armies, let us lay the ax in time to the root of all our miſeries, in puſhing forward by every poſſible means towards a national reformation. We have every poſſible encouragement for that purpoſe, namely, To piety and good morals. The univerſal Sovereign, from whoſe unmeaſureable bounty we receive all we hold dear, ſays, Piety hath the promiſe,—the promiſe of the good things of this life, and of that which is to come. His illuſtrious Vicegerent on Britain's awful throne ſays, We will upon all occaſions diſtinguiſh perſons of piety and virtue by marks of our Royal Favour. And even the intereſt of poſterity, the young and riſing generation, ought powerfully to influence us in this important buſineſs. Who, that is poſſeſſed of the tender feelings of a parent's heart in behalf of their dearly beloved offspring, that would not preſs forward by every poſſible means to ſave from ruin that State, and forward its proſperity, on which their children do ſo much depend, when themſelves are gone hence, and are no more. If therefore the welfare of ourſelves and children in time, and the joint happineſs of both when time is no more, can have their due

influence,

influence, we will certainly break through every difficulty to ſecure ſuch important ends; which, when obtained, will evermore be found the ſureſt way to ſecure a laſting peace and national proſperity.

AN

HUMBLE ADDRESS

TO THE

Right Honourable the Lords and Gentlemen Proprietors of the Landed Intereſt of Great Britain ;

Moſt Noble and Illuſtrious Lords,

THIS once bliſsful iſland,—your joint property and native ſoil,—the Empreſs of the ocean,—the terror and delight of the ſurrounding nations,—even fair Britannia ſtretches out her hand to you for help. It gives the moſt ſenſible diſtreſs of mind to all true lovers of their native country, to behold the conſtantly increaſing depopulation of this once great and mighty, but now declining empire, through emigrations of the poorer ſort to ſettlements abroad, the conſtantly increaſing luxury of the rich at home, the extravagant price of all ſorts of proviſions, the amazing load of our public debt, and heavy taxes

taxes conſequent thereon; the miſmanagement of, and oppreſſion upon the landed intereſt. We are ſorry to find theſe melancholy truths too well ſupported by the teſtimonies of ſeveral able and judicious writers, particularly Dr Price, in his Preſent State of Population in England and Wales. From authentic accounts recited in this eſſay, the following particulars ſeem to be proved: That the number of inhabitants in England and Wales cannot at preſent be ſo many as five millions: That the number of houſes of the beſt ſort had increaſed, between 1765 and 1777, from 236,018 to 263,831; but that in the ſame period, the number of cottages and houſes, having leſs than eight windows, had decreaſed 55,771: That, within this period, the number of our people has been leſſened at leaſt 200,000: That this is only a part of a courſe of depopulation which has been going on ſince the Revolution; and that this depopulation has been derived chiefly from the following cauſes,—the increaſe of our army and navy,—a devouring capital, too large for the body that ſupports it,—the three long and deſtructive continental wars in which we have been involved,—the emi-

grations to our ſettlements abroad, and particularly to the Eaſt and Weſt Indies,—the engroſſing of farms,—the high price of proviſions,—but above all the increaſe of luxury, and of our public debts and taxes. It is obſerved, that the depopulation ariſing from theſe cauſes is the more mortifying, becauſe it is in ſome degree peculiar to this nation; and, in order to illuſtrate this, an account is given of the number and increaſe of the inhabitants in ſome European kingdoms; and particularly in France, where it appears, that the inhabitants cannot be a ſmaller number than 25 millions, and that the annual births exceed the annual deaths a ſeventh part. The average of the former, for five years before 1775, having been 928,918, and of the latter 793,931. After ſtating a great variety of facts, all tending to confirm the rapid progreſs of depopulation among us, Dr Price concludes his eſſay in the following words:—"Thus unhappily "are we diſtinguiſhed in this country: "Nor will it appear wonderful, when we "conſider how unhappily we are diſtin-"guiſhed by ſome of the worſt cauſes of "depopulation, and with what particular "force they have been operating for the

"laſt

" laſt 20 years. At preſent we are ſink-
" ing under new difficulties. The moſt
" valuable of our dependencies are loſt.
" Another foreign war is begun. Our
" ſtrength is waſting; and at the ſame time
" that load of debt, which has preſſed ſo
" heavily on our population, is encreaſing
" faſter than ever. Never were the re-
" ſources of a State ſo anticipated and
" mortgaged. Never before did impru-
" dence and extravagance bring a great
" kingdom into ſuch peril." Theſe me-
lancholly truths are worthy of your Lord-
ſhips moſt ſerious attention; and, if
thought upon in time, all we have yet
loſt may be recovered with exceeding
great advantage. There has no diſaſtrous
events overtaken us yet but the
Oracles of Truth has provided a reme-
dy, whether it refer to the great firſt
cauſe, the anger of the Lord, or the ſecond
cauſes, namely, Our folly and miſconduct
conſequent thereon. The beſt remedy of
all theſe evils we find recorded, Jer. xviii.
7, 8, 9, 10. " At what inſtant I ſhall
" ſpeak concerning a nation and concern-
" ing a kingdom, to pluck up, and to
" pull down, and to deſtroy it; if that
" nation againſt whom I have pronoun-
" ced,

" ced, turn from their evil, I will repent
" of the evil I thought to do unto them.
" And at what inſtant I ſhall ſpeak con-
" cerning a nation, and concerning a
" kingdom, to build and to plant it; if
" it do evil in my ſight, that it obey not
" my voice, then I will repent of the
" good wherewith I ſaid I would benefit
" them."

Again, Iſa. i. " Learn to do well; ſeek
" judgement; relieve the oppreſſed;
" judge the fatherleſs; plead for the wi-
" dow. If you be willing and obedient,
" ye ſhall eat of the good of the land;
" but if ye refuſe and rebel, ye ſhall be
" devoured by the ſword, for the mouth
" of the Lord hath ſpoken it." Thus, my Lords, that Sovereign Majeſty, who is not a man that He ſhould lie, nor the ſon of man that He ſhould repent, hath clearly pointed out our ſin, and the danger conſequent thereon, our duty, and the bleſſings that ſhall aſſuredly follow. What then follows, my Lords, but that you nobly exert your princely powers towards a general reform. From among your illuſtrious number proceeds the great Council of the nation; ſo that no needful power is wanting toward this important reform;

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two principal branches of which are the extermination of oppreſſion from the landed intereſt, *&c.* and a far more vigorous exertion of the civil power for ſuppreſſing vice and immorality, and for encouraging religion and virtue. Among the Jews, we find no ſin ſo grievouſly complained of as their oppreſſions, and no ſin againſt which more grievous judgements are denounced. We heartily wiſh we could ſay, that this ſin is not as rampant amongſt us now as among the Jews of old. O that it were not too eaſily to be ſeen in its direful conſequences in this oppreſſed State. Thouſands in their exceſſive opulence and abundance wallowing in all manner of exceſſes and abominations, while three times as many thouſands, as the final reward of all their ſervices, as beaſts of burden to the reſt, through dire oppreſſion, poverty and want, are ſinking into the loweſt abyſs of earthly miſery, who would be glad of the crumbs that fall from the teeth of their maſters dogs. Every ſucceeding war dragging forth their uneducated, unprincipled ſons, like dogs, into the ſchool of vice, the army and navy. Every ſucceeding peace, ſending home their ſeamen and troops without callings,

callings, and without penſion, to fill the country with troops of beggars and robbers, where, after having robbed and murdered troops of innocent ſubjects, the next quarter ſeſſions ſends them in troops to the gallows.

The army and navy having diſgorged their part, to furniſh the tragical ſcenes, up comes next a troop of hard-fated ſons from the landed intereſt, from their ruined farms, ſhort leaſes, and oppreſſive heights; and ſeldom having it in their power to ſell the neceſſaries of life upon ſuch terms as the poor tradeſmen and labourers were able to buy, and all means ſpent and patience tired out, a fatal neceſſity takes place, that hundreds having turned out to beg, the reſt, having paſſed through the accuſtomed forms, proceed forward in proceſſion to uphold the general carnage on the ignominious trees.

All we have yet related, my Lords, is not the ten thouſand part of the fatal conſequences of oppreſſion; for when people, through oppreſſion, find themſelves not able to live by ordinary induſtry, they muſt now devote their whole ſouls and time to the purſuit of a worldly intereſt. Hence they are led to forget God, to for-

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get Chriſt and eternal ages; they who were once taught, that the few uncertain days or years of their abode here conſtitutes their probationary ſtate, and according as it is ſpent, ſo muſt it fare with them for ever; they who were taught to worſhip God, to read his word, to meditate therein day and night, to talk of his word to their children and domeſtics,—as they ſit in their houſes, or walk by the way, or riſing up, or lying down, are, by oppreſſion, ſo deeply immerſed in the purſuit of a worldly intereſt, that they too often betray their ſouls, and the ſouls of their children, to their eternal ruin. May the Lord of Heaven and Earth diſpoſe your Lordſhips to look out in time, and to bring in a ſovereign remedy for this God provoking ſin. There are thouſands of your princely names, that, with deepeſt abhorrence, would reject the unrighteous gains of oppreſſion, that are poſſeſſed of every noble and benevolent virtue that can adorn the human ſoul; but there are others, whoſe meaſures produce many of thoſe diſmal effects we do ſo ardently deplore, concerning whom we would ſay, a few uncertain days or years will ſoon end the trifling diſtinction which

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at preſent ſubſiſts between the rich and poor, when we ſhall ſtand with them upon even ground. If we were once arrived at the houſe appointed for all living, there the wicked ſhall ceaſe from troubling, and there the weary be at reſt. There the priſoners of death reſt together. They hear not the cry of the oppreſſor. And now, my Lords, ſince the cauſe of ſacred truth and juſtice requires no leſs at our hands, let us duly advert to this well known truth, when ſpeaking concerning the grievous oppreſſions that prevail upon the landed intereſt, that nine-tenths of their oppreſſions flow from themſelves. What numbers have I not witneſſed, ruſhing into the preſence of their noble maſters with moſt unaccountable, and heedleſs impetuoſity, in queſt of their neighbours poſſeſſions; and when the ſtricteſt orders was given, that none ſhould make ſuch offers as would not leave them decent bread for themſelves, yet nothing could avail, till both parties were involved in one general ruin. Thus they fabricate their own miſeries, from which your Lordſhips alone can deliver them. But what ſhall be done to ſave them from each other, as well as from oppreſſive maſters?

ſters? Verily, my Lords, with all poſſible ſubmiſſion to your ſuperior and princely wiſdoms, I can ſee their deliverance in nothing ſhort of a perpetuity. And even although we ſhould grant their maſters to be wholly ignorant in their ſufferings, yet not innocent too in refuſing a remedy; and until that take place, ſome maſters will take the advantage of their folly and indiſcretion, and put the cap-ſtone upon thoſe miſeries they have ſo largely laid in for themſelves. Concerning which maſters I would only ſay, 1. My Lords, What can theſe poor great ones mean? Or what has befallen them? who would be eſteemed learned, wiſe, reaſonable, and juſt, yet has not learned how unwiſe, unreaſonable, and unjuſt they are to their own ſouls; that, for the ſake of a few uncertain days or years ſpent in the wretched purſuit of ten thouſand times more than enough, that, for this, they ſhould riſk an eternity of heavenly joys, by ſpreading deſolation and miſery far and wide around them while they remain in time. The moſt exquiſite learning is but blundering ignorance, the moſt conſummate and finiſhed wiſdom is but folly and madneſs, which has not taught their ſtudents theſe two great

truths, namely, That the wide extended univerſe, with all the pleaſures, riches, and honours with which it abounds, put into the poſſeſſion of one man, is utterly inſufficient to ſatisfy the cravings of one ſingle ſoul endowed with immortality; and that the favour of the ſupreme Majeſty, in and through the great Redeemer, his Son, is the only ſure and ſolid foundation of all happineſs in this world, and of endleſs felicity in that which is to come. How then, my Lords, can thoſe great ones, who look for a perpetuity of bliſs hereafter, refuſe their poor tenants a perpetuity of the comforts of this life? And, How can thoſe who look for deliverance from a perpetuity of miſery hereafter, refuſe their poor tenants deliverance from a perpetuity of oppreſſion and miſery here. My Lords, the great Son of God, for your ſake, ſuffered 33 years baniſhment from his great Father's arms; and, though the heir of all things, yet, for your ſakes, made himſelf ſo poor, that he had no where to lay his bleſſed head. What leſs can your Lordſhips do for Chriſt, what leſs, at the deſire of thoſe bleſſed lips which ſpake as never man ſpake, then to break the bands of oppreſſion, and let

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go his poor captives, at leaſt, for high price and reward; and, in gratitude to your Almighty Deliverer, grant them perpetual deliverance from all their oppreſſions here, and the powers of delivering under your Lordſhips, by hard labour and induſtry, this oppreſſed State from the almoſt infinite load of calamities under which ſhe groans. My Lords, If the Lord of angels, in his firſt entry upon the work of your redemption, was willing for your ſakes to put up with the mean accommodations of a ſtable and manger for his cradle, Will not your Lordſhips, for his ſake, in your noble palaces, and princely towers, reſt ſatisfied with your preſent eaſy affluence and abundance, until the time arrive, when, with heaven's higheſt approbation, you can have a great deal more? If thoſe bleſſed feet, which went about doing good, did, for your ſakes, ſojourn in this lower world 33 years, till the great buſineſs of your redemption was accompliſhed, the prey of oppreſſion then being given up by you the mighty, and the lawful captives delivered, what leſs time can be given them as ſubſtitutes under your Lordſhips, to accompliſh the redemption of the State from that enormous

load of debt under which ſhe lies. And O remember, my Lords, the divine Redeemer had no ſubſtitute in his Work, as your Lordſhips can have in yours. He trode, for your ſakes, the wine-preſs of his Father's wrath alone; and, of the people, there was none with him. And if he, the blood-royal of heaven, did ſweat great drops of blood for you, O do not ſay deeply ſtain the blood of Nobles, as to lift up the heel againſt him. O my Lords, it is but too common in the day of health and proſperity, and fullneſs of all things, to over-rate theſe inferior comforts, and to under-rate the Divine Redeemer and his great ſalvation, and are abundantly cloſe handed to every noble and generous purpoſe tending to promote the honour of God, and the univerſal happineſs of their fellow brethren, although theſe are the primary ends for which the divine Providence hath beſtowed ſuch ample fortunes, namely, That they may honour God with their great fortunes, and be univerſal bleſſings to all around them. But, my Lords, although theſe great duties may be forgotten amidſt the hurry and buſtle of the trivial affairs of time, and all tender feelings for the com-

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mon miſeries that are attendant on the needy and dependent ſtate of man, may be for a time forgotten, yet, when the leaſe of life is at the final cloſe, and all eternity diſcloſed to view; when the awful ſentence is pronounced, "Thou fool, "this night thy ſoul ſhall be required of "thee;" then, Whoſe ſhall theſe things be which thou haſt prepared? Who would not lay their fortunes, ſceptres, crowns and kingdoms at the feet of this Almighty Redeemer, under the terrors of this laſt dreadful hour! What then, my Lords, we would do for him in the hour of ſickneſs and death, is our higheſt wiſdom to do for him in the day of proſperity and health.

My Lords, it is a moſt true obſervation of the great Redeemer of mankind, That never one applied to him in vain,—never one came upon a good errand and went away with a ſore heart. Will your Lordſhips reply, That no earthly power is able to come up to ſuch an example? Yes, my Lords, The Delight of Mankind, the illuſtrious Titus, although an heathen prince, wrote divinely fair after this divine example, whoſe conſtant maxim was, That no man ought to go away ſorrowful from

the preſence of a prince; and therefore it is ſaid, he never ſent any away with an unpleaſing anſwer. And ſo ſtrong a propenſity had he to do good, that one night being put in remembrance by thoſe about him, that he had done nothing for any perſon that day, with a ſorrowful countenance, he replied, "Alas! my friends we "have loſt a day!"—a ſentence worthy of an emperor for its author, and fit to be retained in the memories of all princes and great men.

My Lords, it never was in the power of Titus to do ſuch imminent ſervice in behalf of the Roman empire, in his days, as it is in your Lordſhips power, in behalf of the Britiſh empire, in your days. All that Titus could do was to make the people happy in his time, and to ſet a fair example to his ſucceſſors in power; but your Lordſhips are able, not only to make the people happy in your own time, but alſo, at one potent ſtroke, for ever to put it beyond the power of your lateſt poſterity to nullify the Godlike example once ſet before them. In your Lordſhips power it is to put forth ſuch an unparalelled example of your princely benignity, goodneſs and moderation, as might almoſt

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tempt the revolted collonies to wiſh themſelves back to their former allegiance; and make fair Britannia once more great among the nations, and princeſs among the provinces; and, in your Lordſhips power alſo it is, by permitting a contemptuous treading down of the laws of our Almighty Ally, and handing down the powers of oppreſſion to poſterity, to cruſh your fair Britannia down to a low contemptible colony of France.

Permit me then, my Lords and Gentlemen, to implore you, by all the moſt ſacred ties that can poſſibly influence humanity, to liſten, not barely to our humble ſupplication, but to the divine call, Iſa. i. "Relieve the oppreſſed." And, firſt, for the ſake of that Majeſty Divine who hath ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed your Lordſhips above the common level of mankind, and who looks for, and expects great things at your Lordſhips hands; for his ſake, in behalf of the more indigent part of the human ſpecies; for to whom much is given, much ſurely will be required,—our gracious Creator delights in making his creatures happy, and in awarding their miſeries. Then is your Lordſhips actions truely great and noble, when conſtantly

conſtantly ſtudious to follow the divine example. To this divine and diſtinguiſhing goodneſs alone are your Lordſhips indebted, that you were not born a part of the meaneſt and moſt indigent of the human kind.

Secondly, For his ſake alſo, my Lords, who choſe to be indigent, who choſe to be contemned, and became poor that you might be rich,—that you might be entitled to the treaſures, and numbered with the princes of heaven, even with princes that excell in ſtrength, and are clothed with tranſcendent brightneſs and majeſty. And when your Lordſhips are become men of hoary locks, bending beneath a weight of years, and tottering on the brink of the grave, then let the winds blow, the tempeſtuous ocean rage, the thunders roar, the lightnings flaſh, and univerſal nature be ſhaken to her remoteſt centre, he will be your ſupport under all your infirmities, and the rock of your ſalvation to eternal ages. Did he ſuffer an arreſt upon his great and ſacred perſon, and laid down that life for your Lordſhips ſakes, and for us all, even while we were his enemies, and in proud rebellious arms? Does not your Lordſhips ſtand the priſon-

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ers of amazement? Could even the ſun behold the awful ſight? No. The ſhocking ſcene drove back his chariot wheels; midnight vail'd his face. A midnight nature ſhudder'd to behold; a midnight, new from her Creators, frown. Did the ſun, my Lords, fly his Maker's pain, and ſtart at that enormous load of human guilt which bow'd his glorious head; and will not your Lordſhips, for his ſake, let ſome ſmall conſiderations go in behalf of friends, when you hear ſuch an illuſtrious ſuitor aſk the ſame, ſaying, Relieve the oppreſſed. This divine Perſon was, and would have been infinitely happy, had we never been, or had we been miſerable for ever; but your Lordſhips are not ſo independent of thoſe perſons in whoſe behalf he makes requeſt; yet in this he aſks no further teſtimony of your Lordſhips love for all he has done, but to ſeek judgement to relieve the oppreſſed, to judge the fatherleſs, and to plead for the widow.

Thirdly, We look for your Lordſhips compliance for our Sovereign's ſake. If your Lordſhip ſhould permit the ſpirit of oppreſſion to rage a little longer, and ſuffer ſuch univerſal degeneracy of manners

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to reign among the people, without a more vigorous exertion of the civil power for ſuppreſſion of the ſame, you will ſhake the Britiſh throne,— will tear it from its ſtable foundation, and caſt down a race of moſt illuſtrious Princes, from the higheſt elevation of earthly glory, to the loweſt abyſs of earthly miſery, 1 Sam. xii. 20.

Fourthly, We might expect your Lordſhips compliance for your country's and inheritance ſakes. As yet your Lordſhip's ſit as ſovereign princes, adorned with ſplendor, armed with princely power, almoſt omnipotent, able to bring into effect every great and noble purpoſe you are pleaſed to form. How would it degrade you from your princely dignities, baſely to become the tributary Lords to any foreign power? Lords, ſaid I,—in vain ſhould your Lordſhips truſt the courteſy of enemies to retain thoſe illuſtrious titles, to retain your birthrights and antient inheritances. If the Lord God omnipotent ſhould ſend them in terrible indignation to cut us off for our wickedneſs, whoever our enemies, are we ſhould find them, as the ſcriptures ſpeak, a bitter and haſty nation, who may glory in pulling the mighty

mighty natives from their ſeats, and in exalting them of low degree.

Fifthly, We might expect your Lordſhips compliance for our Religion's ſake. If our God ſhould, in terrible indignation for our oppreſſions, and innumberable other tranſgreſſions, which paſs unregarded by the civil power, (though ſubject to its controul,) ſhould give us a conqueſt into the hand of our enemies, with all the other invaluable bleſſings of a free people, our religion goes alſo. We baniſh Chriſt, and enthrone Antichriſt; and with our baniſhed Redeemer, and our Proteſtant reformed Religion, we baniſh, in effect, every other national bleſſing. The glory then ſhall depart from this our Iſrael. No longer ſhall Britain remain the miſtreſs of the deep. No more homage paid to the Britiſh flag. No longer ſhall Britiſh thunder terrify the ſurrounding nations. Never more ſhall be recovered the ſullied luſtre of Britannia's arms; and when irrecoverably ſunk into this diſgraceful ſtate of humiliation, other nations ſhall aſk, Wherefore hath the Lord done ſo to this great people? What meaneth the heat of this great anger? Deut. xxix. 25. "Then men ſhall ſay, becauſe they have

"forſaken

" forſaken the covenant of the Lord " their God, and have ſinned againſt " Him. And the anger of the Lord was " kindled againſt this land, to bring up- " on it all the curſes that are written in " this Book; and the Lord rooted them " out in great anger, and in wrath, and " in great indignation, as it is this day."

Before concluding, three obſervations occur, not altogether unworthy your Lordſhips notice. The firſt is, That it is beyond the power of human wiſdom to bring any part of theſe (nearly) ten millions into exiſtence upon any other plan than under the encouragement referred to in this publication, and without which all theſe millions yearly muſt be loſt, both to the State and to your Lordſhips. 2dly, Were the encouragement granted, and this wealth brought into exiſtence, I hope we have ſufficiently proved, that it is impoſſible to do juſtice to the State, if her deliverance from that oppreſſive load does not ariſe from the firſt end of thoſe ſupplies. Laſtly, As there is no other internal ſtrength in this country fit to effect this great buſineſs, neither funds to preſerve peace nor to ſupport war, without the people being relieved not only from the

oppreſſions

oppreſſions complained of, but alſo put in poſſeſſion of the oppoſite bleſſings; both of which, if denied, we may read our fate as a State, or kingdom, in Iſaiah, chap. i. upon the ſame ſubject. "Relieve the oppreſſed; judge the fatherleſs; plead for the widow: But if ye refuſe and rebel, ye ſhall be devoured by the ſword; for the Mouth of the Lord hath ſpoken it."

A Letter from the Author to a Perſon of Diſtinction, high in Office in this Kingdom, upon his intended Publication; the reſult of which encouraged him to Print the Work, and bring it forth to public view.

My Lord,

WITH the higheſt degree of that reverence due to your Lordſhip's exalted ſtation and dignity, permit me to take notice, that the incloſed Propoſals is the general heads of a ſmall book I am juſt now going to publiſh. Be pleaſed, my Lord, to honour them with a glance.—Let not the ſeeming impracticability of ſo great an undertaking diſpoſe your Lordſhip to throw it aſide without examination, nor to with-hold the honour of

your countenance and favour, as your Lordſhip is entirely ſenſible, that the ſupreme diſpoſer of the fates of kingdoms doth not always work by the miniſtration of great abilities; on the contrary, he has, and often takes pleaſure in bringing forward the high purpoſes of his Providence by mean and contemptible inſtruments. It is evident then to your Lordſhip, that this oppreſſed State labours under all thoſe evils implied in the general heads of this ſmall Eſſay. It is equally evident, ſhe ſtands in need of all thoſe poſitive reliefs and advantages held forth in the ſame. Shall I beg your Lordſhips attention, while I make a few obſervations on ſome of the moſt principal. And firſt, As the cruſhing weight of the enormous ſum of two hundred and eighty millions muſt be attended with many grievous conſequences in this oppreſſed State, particularly, in the more impoveriſhed parts of the kingdom, would it not be a moſt diſirable bleſſing, if funds could be pointed out capable of reducing eight millions yearly of principal; and theſe new funds in their nature, ſo far from having any oppreſſive effects upon the people, that, on the contrary, they ſhall confeſſedly acknowledge

their

their begun proſperity from their firſt entry upon this arduous taſk.

Secondly, What diſagreeable conſequences are not attendant upon that unnatural, unconſtitutional practice of impreſſing men upon the commencement of a war, a grievous innovation upon the principles of our conſtitution, and upon the natural rights and liberties of mankind. What grief and ſorrow, anger and rage, fills every corner of the kingdom before our fleets are mann'd, &c. What horrid oaths and blaſphemous imprecations are not poured out againſt the authors and cauſes by our more fiery and maſculine ſpirits, inſomuch, that we may ſay concerning our miſeries, and our children on that account, as the Roman Emperor Auguſtus ſaid concerning the vices of ſome of his children, Would to heaven, ſays the Emperor, that I had lived without a wife, or died without children. The defence of this practice, my Lord, is common, namely, The neceſſities of the State; but would it not be moſt deſirable, if the neceſſities of the State could be ſupplied in a far more amicable manner; if we ſhould point out a way to furniſh the State with

200,000 men, without offering violence to the inclinations of one ſingle man.

Thirdly, What diſagreeable conſequences attend the concluſion of a war, when the army and navy is diſbanded. The braveſt ſeamen and troops in the world muſt run away (in want of bread) ſome to the ſervice of foreign Princes and States; ſome may be ſeen begging their bread in the ſtreets of thoſe very realms their valour ſaved from ruin; ſome betake themſelves to the high ways for robbery, ſo that we can ſcarce go a few miles from our own doors, but we are in danger of being knock'd in the head, and cannot promiſe to return either with life or property. Would it not be moſt agreeable to the tender feelings of every perſon poſſeſſed with humanity, were it but to prevent the numberleſs executions that daily take place in conſequence of this woeful neglect of the army, &c. if we ſhall point out a way to raiſe one million eight hundred thouſand pounds to penſion the ſaid forces in time of peace, at L. 9 Sterling yearly *per* man.

Forthly, As the trifling force we content ourſelves with in time of peace, renders us ſo contemptible in the eyes of our enemies,

enemies, as to diſpoſe them to break with us upon the ſlighteſt occaſions, would not ſuch a gallant army, well diſciplined, under penſion, be a ſpecial means under God of keeping our enemies in ſome awe, and of rendering Britain more reſpectable in the eyes of the ſurrounding nations.

Fifthly, As every ſucceeding war is attended with theſe two diſtreſſing effects upon the State, not only to interrupt the payment of paſt arrears, but alſo obliging us to contract more, and ſtill add to the enormous load, what ſingular advantage would it not be to the State, to conſtruct and ſettle theſe new funds, as the eight millions levied yearly for the reduction of the debt, with the eighteen hundred thouſand pounds for penſioning the army, would make us ſtrong, under God, to give our enemies warm play during a war.

Sixthly, Upon this article I ſhall only here take notice, that there are two kinds of oppreſſion prevailing on the landed intereſt; namely, ſhort leaſes, and engroſſing farms. The one diſcouraging induſtry, and all good improvement; the other exterminating the little tenants out of the land, which impolitic meaſures, like a wide

ſpreading peſtilence, carries its deſolating conſequences through all the lower ranks of the people, to the inmoſt receſſes of the kingdom, and is the fatal ſource of all the emigrations and oppreſſions of every other kind under which the lower ranks groan, and the fruitful womb of almoſt every ſpecies of crime and wickedneſs committed in the land. If the propoſed remedy took place, it would not only prevent all emigrations and much oppreſſion in future, but alſo make the fortunes of the nobility and gentry of the nation one third greater than they are at preſent.

Seventhly, Upon the 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, and 14 articles, we may with ſafety pronounce concerning them, that ſuch is their neceſſary connection with, and dependence upon the three foregoing articles, that, until the deſire of them is in ſome meaſure granted, never ſhall the people be freed from oppreſſion, nor recover their wonted proſperity and opulence. Never ſhall emigrations ceaſe, nor that rapid progreſs of depopulation among the people of Great Britain, which has been going on ever ſince the Revolution, nor the true remedy be found againſt a ſpirit of rebellion, which is often ſeeded by a general

general diſcontent in the minds of the people. Never ſhall a ſteady courſe of moderation take place amongſt the neceſſaries of life, nor honeſty and induſtry meet with ſuitable encouragement, nor any intermiſſion of thoſe innumerable robberies with which our country is diſtreſſed, nor our land improved to purpoſe in fertility and beauty, nor its people in population,—until proper meaſures are adopted on the landed intereſt, and proper proviſion made for the army in time of peace. For the particulars of which, I refer your Lordſhip to the publication at large on theſe heads.

Article 15. A more effectual remedy for the ſuppreſſion of vice and immorality, and for the encouragement of religion and virtue; or, the ſureſt way to ſecure a laſting peace and national proſperity. On this head, my Lord, we ſhall only make this ſhort obſervation, that as there is a neceſſary connection betwixt the favour of the ſupreme Majeſty, and the proſperity of a nation, we may with ſafety venture to affirm, that it exceeds the wiſdom of men or angels to draw up a ſyſtem of politics that ſhall ſecure either peace or proſperity to the Britiſh nation, or even

prevent

prevent her final overthrow, if their firſt work is not to ſtem that torrent of vice and immorality which hath broken in upon this nation; which, like an over-flowing flood, hath over-run the whole iſland, and threatens to bury her in her own ruins. In ſuch circumſtances, who can ſettle the balance of power, or diſpoſe the Princes of Europe to divide themſelves into even ſcale againſt the purpoſe of an omnipotent Majeſty? Vanity of vanities. If the univerſal Sovereign ſhould, in terrible indignation for our wickedneſs, throw himſelf into the adverſe ſcale, where are we then with the balance of power? Should he become our enemy, and fight againſt us, Who could ſet bounds to his fiery indignation, or ſay unto Him, Thus far ſhalt thou proceed but no further; and here ſhall the proud waves, and fatal depredations of Almighty vengeance be ſtaid; therefore, we may aſſuredly conclude, that none can ſit down at the helm of this our endangered State, and ſteer her through the ſtormy and tempeſtuous ſea of life, ſtirred into tempeſt by divine indignation for ſin, nor keep her from daſhing to pieces againſt the rocks of war, famine, peſtilence, nor ever con-

duct

duct her into the desired haven of prosperity or safety, by any system of measures drawn from ought but the oracles of truth.

The fate, my Lord, of all nations, and in all ages, constrains me to embrace these sentiments. I ever more found that an universal degeneracy of manners amongst a people does always precede the ruin of a State, which is undoubtedly our situation at this day. The walls of Babylon, my Lord, were as competent for her safety as the British fleet, or the incircling ocean, is for ours; yet when their cup of iniquity was full, and the divine long-suffering could no longer endure, what follows? Why, their almost impregnable, their hundred gated capital, could no longer save them from his anointed Cyrus. Was this a single instance, my Lord, without a second example. Shall not the overgrown power of Persia come down as mightily, when under the frown of the universal Sovereign? Yes. But where shall that hero be found, whose long experience in the arts of war, and military discipline, shall qualify him for this great enterprise? Here is no need of such a long spun out and tedious apparatus,

paratus, where Jehovah's ſword is lent in aid? No. The Macedonian youth, but Philip's warlike ſon, muſt now ariſe into the great Alexander, and, with an handful of Macedonians, diſdaining the aid of his Greek auxiliaries, ſweeps Darius and his army with the beſom of deſtruction. Where is now this great lawgiver?—Yeſterday the terror of the whole earth, today a captive to the Macedonian youth. Where now the luſtre of the Perſian arms, graced ſo lately with valour invincible, ſhining in gold and ſilver, dazzling the eyes of their very conquerors, covering the earth with their innumerable numbers, bearing all down before them with unconquerable bravery. But now the high, the Almighty commiſſion is gone forth. Thus far ſhall they proceed, but no farther; and here ſhall the proud waves, and fatal depredations of the Perſian arms be ſtaid. They muſt now give way to the ſuperior obſtinacy of Macedonian valour, and the fields being ſoaked with rivers of Perſian blood, ſhall next have their carcaſes to improve the ſoil. But if the once unconquerable Darius found a conqueror at laſt, ſurely this conqueror ſhall find none. That monarchy,

of

of which he is the head, may ſay, as once did Babylon, I ſhall be a Lady forever, and ſhall never ſee adverſity.

But who art thou, O power leſs than divine, that, confiding in the greatneſs of thine own ſtrength, amidſt thine own wickedneſs, dareſt look for ſuch permanancy of felicity here. In building up a durable felicity, they build too low that build beneath the ſtars. Thy invincible conqueror, though now puſhing eaſtward, weſtward, northward, and ſouthward; ſo that none is able to ſtand before him. The great horn of his power ſhall ſoon be broken alſo. That princely hand, which now ſo fiercely waves the ſhining ſword, the rapid progreſs of whoſe invincible arms outruns all intelligence, ſhall next, when his ſtrength forſakes him, prove the unguarded hand to hold the poiſoned cup to his intemperate lips, and, by one fatal draught, put an end to all his glory, pomp, and magnificence in one day. Again, be ſtates and kingdoms brought very low, yet, upon a dutiful return to their benignant Creator, they are lifted up from the depths of miſery to high degrees of earthly proſperity.

To mention but a ſingle inſtance, among innumerable, this may ſuffice:— Iſrael in the days of Gideon, Was not his three hundred men as all the thouſands of Iſrael? Their victory that day depended not on numbers great or ſmall, but "the ſword of the Lord and of Gi- "deon." But how endleſs were the liſt of the riſe and fall of ſtates and kingdoms? From which obſervations we may fairly deduce the following truths: Firſt, That there is no ſtate or condition ſo debilitated or broken, into which a kingdom may fall, but, by a due return to their offended Creator, they may on this ground recover all with great advantage. Secondly, That there is no height of power or greatneſs to which a kingdom can arrive, but, by giving way to a deluge of prophaneneſs, vice, and immorality, and an univerſal degeneracy of manners ſuffered to reign without controul; but it ſhall aſſuredly uſher in their final deſtruction. Would we avoid then, My Lord, the rock upon which ſo many great nations have ſplit, could we wiſh to find a ſalve for every ſore under which this oppreſſed ſtate does labour, let us ſeek it only in that way preſcribed by the oracles of truth.

It is this bleſſed Book alone, my Lord, that is competent to inform us duly of the important terms of peace, and reconciliation with our juſtly incenſed Creator, whoſe high diſpleaſure does ſignally appear in various diſpenſations of Providence, particularly in dangerous ſeaſons, an awakening ſword, and empidemical diſtempers in ſeveral parts of the land, and whoſe anger may be ſtill more thoroughly underſtood from our hitherto impious and diſſolute courſes. Meantime, I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your Lordſhip's moſt obedient,

and very humble Servant,

THE AUTHOR.

AN

ADDRESS TO THE POOR,

OR

Thoſe who ſuffer moſt grievouſly from the preſent oppreſſive ſpirit of the times, whether in City or Country;

My Friends,

IF it ſhould pleaſe God, in his providence, to with-hold the ineſtimable bleſſings of deliverance from thoſe evils we do ſo ardently deplore, and the poſſeſſion of thoſe bleſſings we do ſo ardently implore, let us endeavour ſubmiſſively to bear that yoke, from which it appears, we are not yet ripe for deliverance. Let us labour the more attentively in the purſuit of thoſe bleſſings, which, if diligently ſought after, and once ſecured, will not fail nor miſgive us. While ſome are wading to wealth and fortune by oppreſſion, and to fame and empire through

ſeas

ſeas of blood, let us endeavour with equal ardour to preſs forward through the Red Sea of the Redeemer's blood to that kingdom which ſhall not be moved. But what have thoſe in view by ſuch unmeaſurable purſuits, after thoſe treaſures which cannot profit in the awful period of greateſt extremity. The three great idols that doth ſo much engroſs the hearts of mankind are pleaſures, riches and honours; and, to get their fill of theſe, they enlarge their deſires without meaſure; and perhaps they ſoon arrive at the utmoſt height of their firſt wiſhes; but when theſe are obtained, finding they embrace but a phantom, they renew their purſuit, and puſh their conqueſts like Alexander, who having with eaſe come into the poſſeſſion of Macedonia, his father's kingdom, but finding its ſcanty limits too narrow for his capacious deſires, and, at the ſame time, ſeeing others above him, reſolves on a war with Darius King of Perſia (the great lawgiver then of the whole earth;) but altho' Perſia was overthrown, and its ample territories all his own, yet, his thirſt of empire ſtill encreaſed; for he next turned his victorious arms to India, &c. of which he alſo made a conqueſt.

But its extenſive territories, with many other extenſive countries bounded by the ocean, had not the deſired effect of ſatisfying his unbounded ambition, ſo that he became more unhappy than at his firſt ſetting out. He even wept for want of room to his ravaging ſword; and his raging thirſt of empire ſtill encreaſing, Providence, in mercy to mankind, permits a cup of poiſon to put an end at once to his unmeaſurable ambition, and to all his glory, pomp, and magnificence, in one day. O my Friends, the meaneſt conqueror in the kingdom, of the Prince of the kings of the earth, is far greater than Alexander, or Julius Cæſar, or any earthly conqueror. You know the Scripture ſays, that the righteous ſhall reſt from all their labours, and their good works ſhall follow them; yea, ſhall follow them to their honour, their everlaſting honour, and ſhall be their crown of rejoicing in the great day of the Lord. But I am afraid many of the heroes, the tyrannical, and unlawful conquerors of this world, will make a poor figure in the great day of the Lord, provided their works follow them to the next world. What a dreadful tribe of mangled ſoldiers, deſtitute widows

dows crying, and fatherleſs children muſt appear againſt them. One would think that it would be puniſhment ſufficient for the unlawful invading Princes, and conquerors of this world, to hear the men they have cauſed to be ſlain, the orphans they have deprived of their fathers, the widows they have deprived of their huſbands, reciting their acts of valour, through eternity, in the other world. The ſpirit of God ſpeaking in the Pſalms, ſays, "Scatter thoſe of the people that delight "in war." What would thoſe ambitious Princes, the natural and apparently ſworn enemies of Great Britian, that delight ſo much in war, that never let us have half an age of reſt, anſwer for their conduct? What degree of all their conqueſts would they not lay down at the feet of the Prince of the kings of the earth, to be a good friend to them in that great day; yet, it is their own fault, if ſuch friendſhip they want either now or then. Were they wiſe in time, to act in conformity to the true ends of all good government, to wit, The public welfare; but if, in contempt of theſe, and to gratify their lawleſs ambition, they ſhall levy cruel wars, waſting the earth, and deſtroy-

ing their fellow creatures, what wonder if he ſcatter them at laſt with all their power, to their final deſtruction. They ſhall not then have ſo much influence as to be able to ſanctify the murder of their own ſubjects and ours too, by a form of law, and pretence of religion, which will be bound to no faith with heretics. But when the Prince of the kings of the earth makes his glorious appearance in judgement, and call thoſe to account for all their wicked deeds, ſhall behold Him as their Judge, and ſtand their trial like other ſinful mortals, What a poor abject figure will theſe arbitrary Monarchs and tyrants make, who have perſecuted and oppreſſed mankind, to gratify their vile luſts and apetites, when they muſt ſtand before the dread Tribunal of the Man of God's right hand? Such enemies to mercy and juſtice as they, among all the tribes of men, ſhall wail moſt becauſe of Him. But why? Becauſe their own conſciences will inform them what they deſerve, and anticipate the ſentence of the righteous judge. What an awful ſight this, to ſee thoſe who have plundered empires, ſacked cities, ſlaughtered millions, made widows and orphans, that wail and lament

lament for the death of their huſbands and fathers,— to ſee the crowned heads wringing their hands, gnaſhing their teeth, and curſing their fate, all waiting for the final ſentence. What a ſad reverſe. Men who, with their nod, made nations tremble,—all ſhivering, quaking, and trembling before the face of the Lamb.

But might not theſe mighty tyrants aſſemble their guards to attempt a reſcue, and cover their retreat from Eternal Juſtice. Vanity of vanities; their whole power then is ſummed up in one impotent wiſh,—a wiſh, the accompliſhment of which would now fill them with terror. But what is it? Why, that ſome prodigious mountain or rock would fall upon them, and hide them from the face of that tremenduous Majeſty that ſits upon the Throne; as the great day of his wrath is come, and none of his enemies are able to ſtand before him. The Prince of the Kings of the earth will be found the beſt defence of his people, againſt all wicked and arbitrary powers. How highly then does it behove the Princes of this world to examine, in all their deliberations and purpoſes of war, upon what ſide this Almighty Prince is likely to declare himſelf?

It

It is eaſily diſcovered, he is always ſure to declare himſelf upon that ſide where mercy and truth is. The Kings of the earth, with all their ſubjects, are only ſo many diſtinct incorporate bodies in the great ſociety of makind, under the dominion and controul of the Prince of the Kings of the earth. To think he has given laws of nature and religion to direct them in the practice of juſtice and truth, by which they are taught how to behave toward each other. No worldly power whatſoever can ever have any power to do injuſtice; if they do, this holy and righteous King will call them to a ſtrict account for their behaviour. When ruling powers make reaſons of ſtate ſuperior to rules of juſtice and truth, and purſue meaſures of government inimical to ſelf evident and fundamental laws. they are then enemies to the Prince of the Kings of the earth, and will, in the concluſion, feel his power with a vengeance. Chriſtian magiſtrates ought not to proceed one ſtep, without a palpable ſcripture authority, for fear of offending the Prince of the Kings of the earth in making war or peace. The Supreme ought to be conſulted. Matters

never

never go on with good ſucceſs when men do not ſet the Lord before them.

From this picture of diſcontent, ſo eaſy to be read in the lot of princes, let us learn the unſatisfying nature of all earthly enjoyments. Happineſs is the purſuit of all men, but few provide the chart of knowledge pointing where it lies. The proud man ſeeks it in honour,—the covetous man in wealth,—the epicure and glutton in delicate eating and a full belly,—the drunkard ſeeks it in his bottle,—the young man, void of underſtanding, ſeeks it among harlots,—the ambitious, in large poſſeſſions, and extenſive territories; and all mad with diſappointments, find themſelves worſe at the end of their career than at their firſt ſetting out. While they are hot in purſuit of their vain, unſatisfying pleaſures, let us labour to ſecure thoſe pleaſures that are at God's right hand for evermore.

While theſe are labouring by any means to poſſeſs themſelves of thoſe riches that will not profit in the day of wrath, learn we from them, with equal ardour, to ſecure to ourſelves the true riches, namely, The unſearchable riches of Chriſt. While theſe are labouring inceſſantly after fame, honour,

honour, and renown here, ſeek we that honour which cometh from God. Let us ſeek our true honour in honouring God. Them that honour me, (ſays he,) I will honour; and they that deſpiſe me, ſhall one day be lightly eſteemed themſelves. While they are inceſſantly in purſuit of a happineſs that will leave them, when they have moſt need, labour we to ſecure to ourſelves a happineſs which ſhall only be beginning when theirs is at an end. While theſe have their whole attention engroſſed in purſuit of thoſe enjoyments with which they muſt forever part, in 20, 30, or 40 years, let us labour to ſecure an intereſt in thoſe joys which will only be made perfect when time is no more, and unmeaſurable eternity be the date of their duration. But why did we flatter the worlding with 20, 30, or 40 years, to enjoy his foulſome fill of his vile and periſhing huſks? Who can promiſe him, or themſelves, ſo many moments? Do we not ſee men in perfect health in the ſtreets, as it were this moment, the next moment they fall down ſuddenly in a fit of apoplexy; others ſeized with violent and raging fevers, or tormenting and excruciating pains, and diſeaſes which baffle

baffle all the powers of medicine, and ſuddenly diſlodges their reluctant ſouls; ſome ſinking to the floor from their eaſy chair, and deaf even to the moſt piercing ſhrieks of their diſtracted relations; ſome giving up the ghoſt, as they are reclined all alone, under the ſhady arbour to taſte the ſweets of the flowery ſcene; ſome, as they ſail aſſociated with a party of pleaſure, along the ſiilver ſtream, while wine and muſic flow around; ſome intercepted as they are returning home, and ſome interrupted as they enter upon an important negotiation; ſome arreſted with the gain of injuſtice in their hand, and ſome ſurpriſed in the immediate act of lewdneſs or cruelty.

Legions, legions of diſaſters, ſuch as no prudence can forſee, nor no care prevent, ly in wait to accompliſh our doom. A ſtarting horſe may throw his rider, and at once daſh his body againſt the ſtones, and fling his ſoul into the inviſible world; a ſtack of chimneys may tumble into the ſtreet, and cruſh the unwary paſſenger under its ruins; or even a tile dropping from the roof may be as fatal as the fall of the whole ſtructure. If we, or they, my dear friends, are thus ſuddenly arreſted,

ed, and let ſlip the ſweet, the mediatoral hour, where are we? O what pale reviews, what ſtartling proſpects muſt conſpire to augment the ſorrows of that tremenduous hour? Look they backward, ſtill impenitent, and behold a moſt melancholy ſcene—ſins unrepented of, mercy ſlighted, and the day of grace ending. Look they forward, nothing preſents itſelf but the righteous Judge, the dread tribunal, and a moſt ſolemn reckoning. Roll they around their affrighted eyes, here are attending friends, and, if accomplices in debauchery, it ſharpens their anguiſh that they have not ſinned alone, but drawn others into the ſnare. At laſt, perhaps, they begin to pray. Finding no other poſſible way of relief, they are conſtrained to apply unto the Almighty with trembling lips and a faultering tongue; they cry unto that ſovereign Being who kills and makes alive. But why, O why have they deferred their addreſſes to Heaven ſo long? Why have they deſpiſed all his councils, and ſtood incorrigible under his inceſſant reproofs? How often have they been forwarned of thoſe terrors, and moſt importunately entreated to turn to the Lord? I wiſh, my dear friends,

they

they may find favour at this laſt hour, and, by a miracle of grace, be ſnatched from the very brink, the breaking brink, of eternal miſery. But alas! who can tell, Whether affronted Majeſty will lend an ear? He may, for aught any mortal knows, "Laugh at their calamity, and "mock when their fear cometh." Thus they ly groaning out the poor remains of life, their limbs bathed in ſweat, their heart ſtruggling with convulſive throws; pains inſupportable, throbbing through every pulſe, and innumberable darts of agony transfixing their conſcience.

In that dread moment, how the frantic ſoul
Raves round the Walls of her Clay Tenement;
Runs to each avenue, and ſhrieks for help,
But ſhrieks in vain. How wiſhfully ſhe looks
On all ſhe's leaving, now no longer hers,
A little longer, yet a little longer,
O! might ſhe ſtay to waſh away her crimes,
And fit her for her paſſage. Mournful ſight.
Her very eyes weep blood, and every groan
She heaves is big with horror. But the Foe,
Like a ſtaunch murderer, ſteady to his purpoſe,
Purſues her cloſe through every lane of life,
Nor miſſes once the track, but preſſes on,
Till, forc'd at laſt to the tremenduous Verge,
At once ſhe ſinks.

Dr Blair.

If this be the end of the ungodly, my Friends, come not thou into their ſecret,

unto their aſſemblies be not thou united. O how awfully accompliſhed is that prediction of inſpired wiſdom. Sin, though ſeemingly ſweet in the commiſſion, in the iſſue biteth like a ſerpent, and ſtingeth like an adder. Happy diſſolution, were this the period of their woes; but, alas! all theſe tribulations are only the beginnings of ſorrow. No ſooner has the laſt pang diſlodged the reluctant ſoul, but they are hurried into the preſence of an injured and angry God, not under the conducting care of beneficent angels, but expoſed to the inſults of accurſed ſpirits, who lately tempted them, now upbraid them, and will for ever torment them. Who can conceive their confuſion and diſtreſs when they ſtand guilty and inexcuſable before their incenſed Creator. They are received with frowns. The God that made them has no mercy on them. The Prince of Peace, the Fountain of Felicity, rejects them with abhorrence. He conſigns them over to chains of darkneſs, and receptacles of deſpair againſt the ſeverer doom, and more public infamy of the Great Day. Then all the vials of wrath will be emptied upon theſe wretched creatures. The Law they have violated

violated, and the Goſpel they have ſlighted; the power they have defied, and the goodneſs they have abuſed, will all get themſelves honour in their exemplary puniſhment. Then God, the God to whom vengeance belongeth, will draw the arrow to the very head, and ſet them as the mark of his inexorable diſpleaſure. Reſurrection will be no privilege to them, but immortality itſelf their everlaſting curſe. They muſt awake, muſt ariſe, muſt appear at the bar, and meet the Judge; a Judge, before whom the pillars of heaven tremble, and the earth melts away; a Judge, once long ſuffering, and very compaſſionate, but now unalterably determined to teach ſtubborn offenders what it is to provoke the omnipotent Godhead; what it is to trample upon the blood of his Son, and offer deſpite to all the gracious overtures of his Spirit. O the perplexity, the diſtraction, that muſt confound the impenitent rebels, when they are ſummoned to the great Tribunal. Miſery of miſeries, too ſhocking for reflection to dwell upon; but if ſo diſmal to forſee, and that at a diſtance, together with ſome comfortable expectation of eſcaping, O how better, how inconceiv-

ably bitter, to bear, without any intermiſſion, or any mitigation, through hopeleſs and eternal ages.

Who has any bowels of pity? Who has any ſentiments of compaſſion? Who has any tender concern for his fellow creatures? Who, in God's name, and for Chriſt's ſake, let him ſhew it, by warning every man, to ſeek the Lord while he may be found, to throw down the arms of rebellion before the act of indemnity expires, ſubmiſſively to adore the Lamb, while he holds out the golden ſceptre — Here, let us act the friendly part to mankind.— Here let the whole force of our benevolence exert itſelf, in exhorting whomſoever we are likely to influence, to take the wings of faith unfeigned, of repentance undelayed, and flee away from this wrath to come.

O my friends, who would for the uncertain enjoyments of precarious time run the dreadful riſk, although crowns and kingdoms were their ſure conqueſt? Who would, by delay, put ſo great a ſalvation upon a caſt of dice, that might yet make it ſure beyond all peradventure, by making it the main bent, and firſt ſtudy of our preſent moments. Our time

paſt

paſt is perhaps all loſt from this moſt important purpoſe, the time to come may not be ours; the preſent moment, then, may fix our everlaſting fates. Why ſhould even oppreſſion and poverty, with all their black train of attendants, cold, hunger, nakedneſs, and want of all things that can render life comfortable, Why ſhould even theſe prove any longer the unhappy temptations to forget or neglect our everlaſting all, our one thing needful? Will you ſtill object your children? What ſhall come of the riſing generation? Thouſands of us are neither able to feed nor cloath, nor educate, nor give them callings; and we are dreadfully afraid leſt their bodily wants ſhall impel them to impious, to dangerous, to criminal courſes; and our extreme poverty and incapacity to do them juſtice, weakens our authority, and makes them to diſdain our counſels. I anſwer, the caſe is grievous, and it is mine as well as yours; but it is not without remedy. I likewiſe acknowledge it is too frequently the caſe, that the children of parents, that have little of preſent benefit, and leſs in expectation from them, do too often deſpiſe their authority.

ty, and ſlight their beſt councils. But remember,

Firſt, That the God that cannot lie hath promiſed, that, if we ſeek firſt the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs, all theſe things ſhall be added unto us. If he who cloaths the lillies of the field in ſuch verdure and beauty, that, although they neither toil nor ſpin, Solomon in all his glory could not equal them,—will he not much more attend to, and ſupply all our real wants, if we are not wanting to ourſelves.

Secondly, If we are ſo cruſhed and born down by oppreſſion, that we are diſabled from the diſcharge of more than one of the duties we owe to them, and be their contempt, and obſtinate carriage as much as it may, yet we are not diſabled from praying for them. The more we are diſabled in making proviſion for their bodies, the more let us wreſtle with God both for their bodies and ſouls. If you can obtain but one requeſt of them, let it be, that they attend the houſe of God, and hear what God the Lord will ſay unto them. And go to God, by prayer, in their behalf, and pray thus: Lord, I have abundant reaſon to believe that my dear

children

children are in a ſtate of unbelief,—help them, Lord, to embrace Chriſt by faith,—help to embrace him as their prophet, to cure their ignorance, and to teach them by his word and ſpirit,—help them, Lord, to embrace him as their prieſt, to atone for their ſin and guilt and intercede for them,—help them, Lord, to embrace Chriſt as their king, that he may rule them by his laws, and ſubdue all his and their enemies. Give them, Lord, this gracious Saviour,—to ſave them from the Devil and all his temptations,—to ſave them from the world, and all its allurements and frowns,—to ſave them from the fleſh, with all its evil motions and enticements. Lord, they are ready to renounce all duty to me as a father,—do thou, Lord, become a father to them in my ſtead, and let Chriſt be formed in them this day, the hope of glory. Suffer them not to give ſleep to their eyes, nor ſlumber to their eye-lids, till they are ſavingly reconciled to thee through the dear Redeemer. Do not let them grow old men and women in the Devil's ſervice. What, Lord, although they are deſtitute of all good, art not thou able to give them all they want? O thou great Giver of every good and per-

fect gift! What though they cannot believe, do thou help their unbelief and give them faith; what though they cannot repent, do thou give them repentance not to be repented of; what though they cannot walk one ſtep in thy way, do thou take them by the arms and teach them to go; what though they cannot pray, do thou, Lord, teach them to pray; though they cannot profit by what they read or hear, do thou, Lord, teach them to profit; and although they can do nothing of themſelves, yet they can do all things through Chriſt ſtrengthening them. O ſay concerning them, "My grace ſhall be "ſufficient for them, and my ſtrength "ſhall be made perfect in their weakneſs." Amen. Lord, O ſay thou Amen.

In this, my dear friends, or in ſome ſuch manner, may parents wreſtle with Heaven in behalf of their children; and as opportunity offers, and their poor debilitated circumſtances may permit, doing what little they can, and offering their beſt counſels for their ſuitable conduct in time and happineſs through eternity. And although it ſhould produce no hopeful fruits in your time, it may be bleſſed to do them good when you are gone hence, and

are

are no more in time; and if wicked and prophane people ſhould ſcoff at theſe ſerious exerciſes of prayer, and religious counſels, &c. in the day of proſperity and health, yet they ſhall not ſo contemn them in the hour of ſickneſs and death.

Thirdly, It may pleaſe God that theſe oppreſſions may ſubſide, (which ſo much diſables thouſands of the lower ranks from doing juſtice to their children and families, and is the ſource of ſo much ignorance and impiety; and oft times to ſupply their wants, runs into dangerous and criminal courſes.) Perhaps our great ſuperiors, learning the true ſtate and real diſtreſſes of this oppreſſed country, eſpecially in towns, through decay of trade, high priced proviſions, ſcarcity of work among labouring people, lowneſs of wages, ſhortneſs of leaſes in the country, ſmall returns by the crops of ruined farms, bad ſeaſons ſent by the hand of Heaven for our incorrigible wickedneſs, to the damage of the crops and threatning their deſtruction, threatned frequently with an awakening ſword; all put together, amounting to a moſt certain indication of the high diſpleaſure of heaven for our ſins; I ſay, a proper repreſentation of our private diſtreſſes,

ſtreſſes, of which they can know little by a flying report, added to the knowledge of our public burthens, and our great depravity and corruption, in which they are well verſant, may, and undoubtedly will, draw their moſt ſerious attention in order to our relief. The Britiſh Senate, for generoſity and juſtice, is revered all over Europe. Its profound knowledge and wiſdom cannot fail to diſcern the propriety of a redreſs, and its goodneſs will moſt readily grant the ſame, upon a due and proper repreſentation of our ſtate. To the firſt and greateſt of theſe evils, namely, Our extreme depravity and corruption, and want of a reform, the wakeful eyes of our moſt gracious Sovereign have been particularly attentive. Hence the royal Proclamation was iſſued for that purpoſe, inviting us back to our offended Creator, by every motive that could induce, either of terror, or by marks of royal grace and favour. But in the event of ſhort coming of the ſo much deſired effects, what remains but ſome ſuch expedient as their wiſdom ſhall approve, for putting life and ſpirit into thoſe, by a well appointed commiſſion, for inſpection into the conduct of them whoſe buſineſs it is to give effect to

all

all thoſe laws enacted for ſuch grand and important purpoſes.

The ſecond evil, namely oppreſſion, with proper means of remedy and redreſs, muſt alſo be left to the wiſdom of the nation, however individuals may offer their ſentiments to the public on theſe heads as means of remedy and redreſs, which right none can be denied, as every man has an intereſt in the ſafety, well being, and proſperity of the State. Yet the only perfect model and plan of relief muſt proceed from them whoſe office and charge it is; nor can this on a ſuddent be expected, until neceſſary time, and due information ſhall produce the ſame.

Having therefore diſburdened our griefs in a moſt humble and ſubmiſſive manner, into the boſoms of thoſe, who, in proceſs of time, may hand them forward towards the ſeat of royal Majeſty, and, in ſo doing, thrown our ſmall mite into the general treaſury of the public welfare, let us addreſs ourſelves to the more private concerns of our domeſtic affairs; and, in the great Name of God, under all our poverty, miſeries, and accumulated diſtreſſes, to apply ourſelves more fervently that ever

ever to a much neglected, but moſt important duty, namely, The cultivation of piety and virtue in our young and tender offspring. The defects of maintenance of cloathing, of ſchool-fees, of power and ability to give them trades, are great wants, and great diſcouragements among the lower ranks, of poor oppreſſed ones, let us aim at every point of duty; and He who meeteth thoſe, who remember Him in his ways, will not be wanting ſooner or later to relieve us; and in order to ſet furth the aſtoniſhing madneſs and folly of all thoſe parents, (whether rich or poor,) that are more ſolicitous to amaſs much wealth, and lay up treaſures and great fortunes for children on earth, than to make them rich towards God, by teaching them how to ſecure an intereſt in their great Redeemer, and lay up for themſelves treaſures in heaven; we will lay before ourſelves (for our joint inſtruction and warning againſt fatal miſtakes of this kind in future,) a moſt moving and pitiful relation of a lovely boy, cut off in the bloom of life from his careleſs parents, under the mournful diſadvantages of a total neglect of all pious and religious inſtruction, together with the fruitleſs lamentations

of a total neglect of all pious and religious inſtruction, together with the fruitleſs lamentations of the diſconſolate parents for the afflicting circumſtances of their ſad neglects, quoted from the Meditations of the great Mr Hervey.

" Here lies the grief of a fond mother, " and the blaſted expectation of an indul- " gent father. The youth grew up like " a well-watered plant; he ſhot deep, " roſe high, and bid fair for manhood. " But juſt as the cedar began to tower, " and promiſed, 'ere long, to be the " pride of the wood, and prince among " the neighbouring trees,— behold the " ax is laid to the root; the fatal blow " ſtruck; and all its branching honours " tumbled to the duſt.— And did he " fall alone? No: The hopes of his fa- " ther that begat him, and the pleaſing " proſpects of her that bare him, fell, " and were cruſhed together with him."

" Doubtleſs, it would have pierced " one's heart to have beheld the tender " parents, following the breathleſs youth, " to his long home. Perhaps, drowned " in tears, and all overwhelmed with " ſorrows, they ſtood like weeping ſta- " tues on this very ſpot.—Methinks I ſee

" the deeply diſtreſſed mourners attending
" the ſad ſolemnity. How they wring
" their hands, and pour floods from their
" eyes!—Is it fancy? or do I really hear
" the paſſionate mother, in an agony of
" affliction, taking a final leave of the
" darling of her ſoul?—Dumb ſhe re-
" mained, while the awful obſequies were
" performing: dum with grief, and lean-
" ing upon the partner of her woes.
" But now the inward anguiſh ſtruggles
" for vent; it grows too big to be re-
" preſſed. She advances to the brink of
" the grave. All her ſoul is in her eyes.
" She faſtens one more look upon the
" dear doleful object, before the pit ſhuts
" its mouth upon him. And as ſhe looks,
" ſhe cries, in broken accents, interrupt-
" ed by many a riſing ſob—ſhe cries—
" Farewell, my ſon! my ſon! my only
" beloved!—Would to God I had died
" for thee!—Farewell, my child! fare-
" well all my earthly happineſs!—I ſhall
" never more ſee good in the land of the
" living. Attempt not to comfort me.
" I will go mourning all my days, till
" my grey hairs come down with ſorrow
" to the grave."

From

" From this affecting repreſentation, " let parents be convinced, how highly " it concerns them to cultivate the " morals, and ſecure the immortal in- " tereſts of their children.— If you really " love the offspring of your own bodies ; " if your bowels yearn over thoſe amiable " pledges of conjugal endearments ; ſpare " no pains ; give all diligence, I entreat " you, to bring them up in the nurture " and admonition of the Lord. Then, " may you have joy in their life. If " their ſpan is prolonged ; their unblame- " able and uſeful conduct will be the ſtaff " of your age, and a balm of declining " nature. Or, if the number of their " years be cut off in the midſt, you may " commit their remains to the duſt, with " much the ſame comfortable expecta- " tions, as you ſend the ſurvivors to " places of genteel education. You may " commit them to the duſt, with chear- " ful hopes of receiving them again to " your arms, inexpreſſibly improved in " every noble and endearing accompliſh- " ment."

" 'Tis certainly a ſevere trial ; and " much more afflictive, than I am able " to imagine, to reſign a lovely blooming

" creature, ſprung up from your own
" loins, to the gloomy receſſes of corrup-
" tion. Thus to reſign him, after having
" been long dandled upon your knees,
" united to your affections by a thouſand
" ties of tenderneſs; and now become
" both the delight of your eyes, and the
" ſupport of your family!—To have ſuch
" a one torn from your boſom, and
" thrown into darkneſs: Doubtleſs it
" muſt be like a dagger in your hearts—
" But O! how much more cutting to
" you, and confounding to the child,
" to have the ſoul ſeparated from God!
" and for ſhameful ignorance or early im-
" piety, tranſmitted to places of eternal
" torment! How would it aggravate
" your diſtreſſes, and add a diſtracting
" emphaſis to all your ſighs, if you ſhould
" follow the pale corpſe with theſe bitter
" reflections!—This dear creature, though
" long ago capable of knowing good
" from evil, is gone out of the world,
" before it had learned the great deſign
" of coming into it. A ſhort-lived, mo-
" mentary exiſtence, it received from me;
" but no good inſtructions, no holy ad-
" monitions, nothing to further its well-
" being in that everlaſting ſtate upon

" which

" which it is now entered. The poor
" body is conſigned to the coffin, and car-
" ried out to conſume away, in the cold
" and ſilent grave. And what reaſon
" have I to ſuppoſe, that the precious
" ſoul is in a better condition? May I
" not juſtly fear, that, ſentenced by the
" righteous Judge, it is going, or gone
" away into the pains of endleſs puniſh-
" ment?—Perhaps, while I am bewailing
" its untimely departure; it may be cur-
" ſing, in utter darkneſs, that ever to be
" deplored, that moſt calamitous day,
" when it was born of ſuch a careleſs,
" ungodly parent as I have been."

" Nothing, I think, but the gnawings
" of that worm which never dies, can
" equal the anguiſh of theſe ſelf-condemn-
" ing thoughts. The tortures of a rack
" muſt be an eaſy ſuffering, compared
" with the ſtings and horror of ſuch a
" remorſe.—How earneſtly do I wiſh,
" that as many as are intruſted with the
" management of children, would take
" timely care to prevent theſe ſcourges of
" conſcience; by endeavouring to con-
" duct their minds into an early know-
" ledge of Chriſt, and a cordial love of
" his truth."

" On this hand is lodged one, whoſe
" ſepulchral ſtone tells a moſt pitiful tale
" indeed! Well may the little images,
" reclined over the ſleeping aſhes, hang
" down their heads with that penſive air!
" None can conſider ſo mournful a ſtory,
" without feeling ſome touches of ſym-
" pathiſing concern.— His age twenty-
" eight; his death ſudden; himſelf cut
" down in the prime of life, amidſt all
" the vivacity and vigour of manhood;
" while his breaſts were full of milk, and
" his bones moiſtened with marrow. Pro-
" bably he entertained no apprehenſions
" of the evil hour. And indeed, who
" could have ſuſpected, that ſo bright a
" ſun ſhould go down at noon? To hu-
" man appearance his hill ſtood ſtrong.
" Length of days ſeemed written in his
" ſanguine countenance. He ſolaced
" himſelf with the proſpect of a long,
" long ſeries of earthly ſatisfactions —
" When, lo! an unexpected ſtroke de-
" ſcends from that mighty arm, which
" overturneth the mountains by their
" roots; and cruſhes the imaginary hero,
" before the moth; as quickly, and more
" eaſily, than our fingers preſs ſuch a
" feebly fluttering inſect to death."

" Perhaps,

" Perhaps the nuptial joys were all he
" thought on. Were not ſuch the breath-
" ings of his enamoured ſoul? Yet a very
" little while, and I ſhall poſſeſs the ut-
" moſt of my wiſhes. I ſhall call my
" charmer mine; and in her enjoy what-
" ever my heart can crave. In the midſt
" of ſuch enchanting views, had ſome
" faithful friend but ſoftly reminded him
" of an opening grave, and the end of
" all things: How unſeaſonable would he
" have reckoned the admonition, and
" how impertinent the perſon who admi-
" niſtered it! Yet, though all warm with
" life, and rich in viſionary bliſs, he was
" even then tottering upon the brink of
" both. O dreadful viciſſitude! to have
" the bridal feſtivity turned into the fu-
" neral ſolemnity! O deplorable misfor-
" tune! to be ſhip-wrecked in the very
" haven, and periſh even in ſight of hap-
" pineſs! What a memorable proof is
" here, of the frailty of man in his beſt
" eſtate: Look, O! look on this monu-
" ment ye gay and careleſs; attend to
" this date; and boaſt no more of to-
" morrow!

" Who can tell but the bride-maids,
" girded with gladneſs, had prepared the

" marriage-

" marriage-bed? had decked it with the
" richeſt covers, and dreſſed it in pillows
" of down? When, oh! truſt not in
" youth, or ſtrength, nor in any thing
" mortal: for there is nothing certain,
" nothing to be depended on; beneath
" the unchangeable God—Death, relent-
" leſs death, is making him another kind
" of bed in the duſt of the earth. Unto
" this he muſt be conveyed, not with
" ſplendid proceſſion of joyous attendants,
" but ſtretched on the gloomy hearſe,
" and followed by a train of mourners.
" On this he muſt take up a lonely lod-
" ging nor ever be releaſed till the hea-
" vens are no more. In vain does the
" conſenting fair-one put on her orna-
" ments, and expect her ſpouſe. Did
" ſhe not, like Siſera's mother, look out
" of the lattice; chide the delays of her
" beloved; and wonder why his chariot
" was ſo long in coming? little thinking
" that the intended bridegroom had for-
" ever done with tranſitory things! that
" now everlaſting cares employ his mind
" without one ſingle remembrance of his
" lovely Lucinda!—Go, diſappointed vir-
" gin! Go, mourn the uncertainty of all
" created bliſs! teach thy ſoul to aſpire

" after

" after a ſure and immutable felicity!
" for the once gay and gallant Fidelio
" ſleeps in other embraces; even in the
" icy arms of death! forgetful, eternally
" forgetful, of the world—and thee.

" Hitherto one is tempted to exclaim
" againſt the King of Terrors, and call
" him capriciouſly cruel. He ſeems, by
" beginning at the wrong end of the re-
" giſter, to have inverted the laws of
" nature. Paſſing over the couch of de-
" crepit age, he has nipped infancy in its
" bud: blaſted youth in its bloom, and
" torn up manhood in its full maturity.
" terrible indeed are theſe providences,
" yet not unſearchable their counſels.

" Such ſtrokes muſt not only grieve
" the relatives but ſurpriſe the whole
" neighbourhood. They ſound a power-
" ful alarm to heedleſs dreaming mortals,
" and are intended as a remedy for our
" carnal ſecurity. Such paſſing-bells in-
" culcate loudly our Lord's admonition;
" Take ye he heed, Watch and pray:
" for ye know not when the time is.—
" We nod, like intoxicated creatures,
" upon the very verge of a tremendous
" precipice. Theſe aſtoniſhing diſpenſa-
" tions are the kind meſſengers of Hea-
" ven;

" ven; to rouſe us from our ſupineneſs,
" and quicken us into timely circumſpec-
" tion. I need not, ſurely, accommo-
" date them with language, nor act as
" their interpreter. Let every one's con-
" ſcience be awake, and this will appear
" their awful meaning,—O! ye ſons of
" men, in the midſt of life you are in
" death. No ſtate, no circumſtances can
" aſcertain your preſervation a ſingle mo-
" ment. So ſtrong is the tyrant's arm
" that nothing can reſiſt its force; ſo true
" his arm that nothing can elude the
" blow. Sudden as lightning, ſometimes,
" is his arrow launched; and wounds,
" and kills, in the twinkling of an eye.
" Never promiſe yourſelves ſafety in any
" expedient but conſtant preparation. The
" fatal ſhafts fly ſo promiſcuouſly that
" none can gueſs the next victim; there-
" fore, be ye always ready; for in ſuch
" an hour as ye think not, the final ſum-
" mons cometh. The reiterated warning,
" I acknowledge, is too needful; may
" the divine grace render it effectual! The
" momentous truth, though worthy to be
" engraved on the tables of a moſt tena-
" cious memory, is but ſlightly ſketched
" on the tranſient flow of paſſion. We

" ſee

" ſee our neighbours fall; we turn pale
" at the ſhock; and feel, perhaps, a trem-
" bling dread. No ſooner are they re-
" moved from our ſight but, driven in
" the whirl of buſineſs, or lulled in the
" languors of pleaſure, we forget the pro-
" vidence, and neglect its errand. The
" impreſſion made on our unſtable
" minds, is like the trace of an arrow
" through the penetrated air, or the path
" of a keel in the furrowed wave.—
" Strange ſtupidity! to cure it, another
" monitor beſpeaks me, from a neigh-
" bouring ſtone. It contains the narra-
" tive of an unhappy mortal, ſnatched
" from his friends, and hurried to the
" awful bar; without leiſure, either to
" take a laſt farewell of the one, or to
" put up ſo much as a ſingle prayer pre-
" paratory for the other; killed, accord-
" ing to the uſual expreſſion, by a ſudden
" ſtroke of caſualty.

" Was it then a random ſtroke? Doubt-
" leſs the blow came from an aiming,
" though inviſible, hand. God preſideth
" over the armies of heaven: God ruleth
" among the inhabitants of the earth;
" and God conducteth what men call
" chance. Nothing, nothing comes to

" paſs

" paſs through a blind and diſcerning fa-
" tality. If accidents happen, they hap-
" pen according to the exact foreknow-
" ledge, and conformably to the determi-
" nate counſels of Eternal Wiſdom. The
" ſeemingly fortuitous diſaſter is only the
" agent, or inſtrument, appointed to exe-
" cute the ſupreme decree. When the
" king of Iſrael was mortally wounded,
" it ſeemed to be a caſual ſhot. *A cer-*
" *tain man drew a bow, at a venture. At*
" *a venture,* as he thought. But his
" hand was ſtrengthened, by an omni-
" potent aid; and the ſhafts levelled, by
" an unerring eye. So that, what we
" term *caſualty*, is really *Providence;* ac-
" compliſhing deliberate deſigns, but con-
" cealing its own interpoſition. How
" comforting this reflection! admirably
" adapted to ſooth the throbbing anguiſh
" of the mourners, and to compoſe their
" ſpirits into a quiet ſubmiſſion! Excel-
" lently ſuited, to diſſipate the fears of
" godly ſurvivors, and create a calm in-
" trepidity even amidſt innumerable
" perils!

" How thin is the partition, between
" this world and another! how ſhort the
" tranſition, from time to eternity! the

" partition,

" partition, nothing more than the breath
" in our noſtrils; and the tranſition may
" be made in the twinkling of an eye—
" Poor Chremylus, I remember, aroſe
" from the diverſions of a card-table,
" and dropt into the dwellings of dark-
" neſs—One night Corinna was all gaiety
" in her ſpirits, all finery in her apparel,
" at a magnificent ball.—The next night,
" ſhe lay pale and ſtiff, an extended
" corpſe, and ready to be mingled with
" the mouldering duſt.—Young Atticus
" lived to ſee his ample and commodious
" ſeat compleated: but not to ſpend one
" joyous hour, under the ſtately roof.
" The ſaſhes were hung, to admit the
" day, but the maſter's eyes are cloſed in
" endleſs night. The apartments were
" furniſhed, to invite ſociety, or admini-
" ſter repoſe; but their lord reſts in the
" lower parts of the earth, in the ſolitary,
" ſilent chambers of the tomb. The gar-
" dens were planted, and a thouſand ele-
" gant decorations deſigned; but alas!
" their intended poſſeſſor is gone down
" to the place of ſkulls; is gone down to
" the valley of the ſhadow of death."

Since then, my dear Friends, we are ſo liable to be diſpoſſeſſed of our earthly ta-

bernacle, let us look upon ourſelves only as tenants at will, and hold ourſelves in perpetual readineſs to depart at a moment's warning. Without ſuch a habitual preparation, we are like thoſe that ſleep on the top of a maſt, while a horrid gulf yauns, or furious wave rages below; and where can be the peace, what the ſatisfaction of ſuch a ſtate; whereas a prepared condition, will inſpire a chearfulneſs of temper, not to be ruffled by every low vexation, and create a firmneſs of mind not to be overthrown by the moſt threatning dangers; nor can poſſibly be rendered unhappy in the loweſt deeps of poverty to which we may be reduced. I have the rather choſen to conclude my addreſs to you on theſe awful topics, upon theſe two accounts, becauſe, according to the inſpired writings, firſt, There is nothing elſe left to diſtinguiſh betwixt a wiſe man and a fool, but this alone, of making it the chief buſineſs of life to make an early and ſuitable preparation for death. "O "that they were wiſe, that they under-"ſtood this, that they would conſider "their latter end." And to the ſame purpoſe, Job tells us, "Behold, the fear "of the Lord, that is wiſdom; and to

"depart

" depart from evil, is underſtanding." Becauſe the poor having ſmall intereſt in this world, ſhould be eſpecially attentive not to throw up their intereſt in the next. — Secondly, Becauſe, during the ſhort ſpace of my tranſcient abode in this city, and even while I write, there is not one inſtance referred to in the above quotations, but, in the ſpace of a few days, happened all around me.— Infancy nipt in the bud,— youth blaſted in the bloom,— ſeveral pleaſant boys cut off ſuddenly,— manhood tore up in full maturity,— Nobles and others ſuddenly dropping down in the ſtreets, without one moment's previous illneſs ;—and what has happened to others may happen to us.— Death expects us every where ;— let us be wiſe therefore, and expect death every where.

FINIS.

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